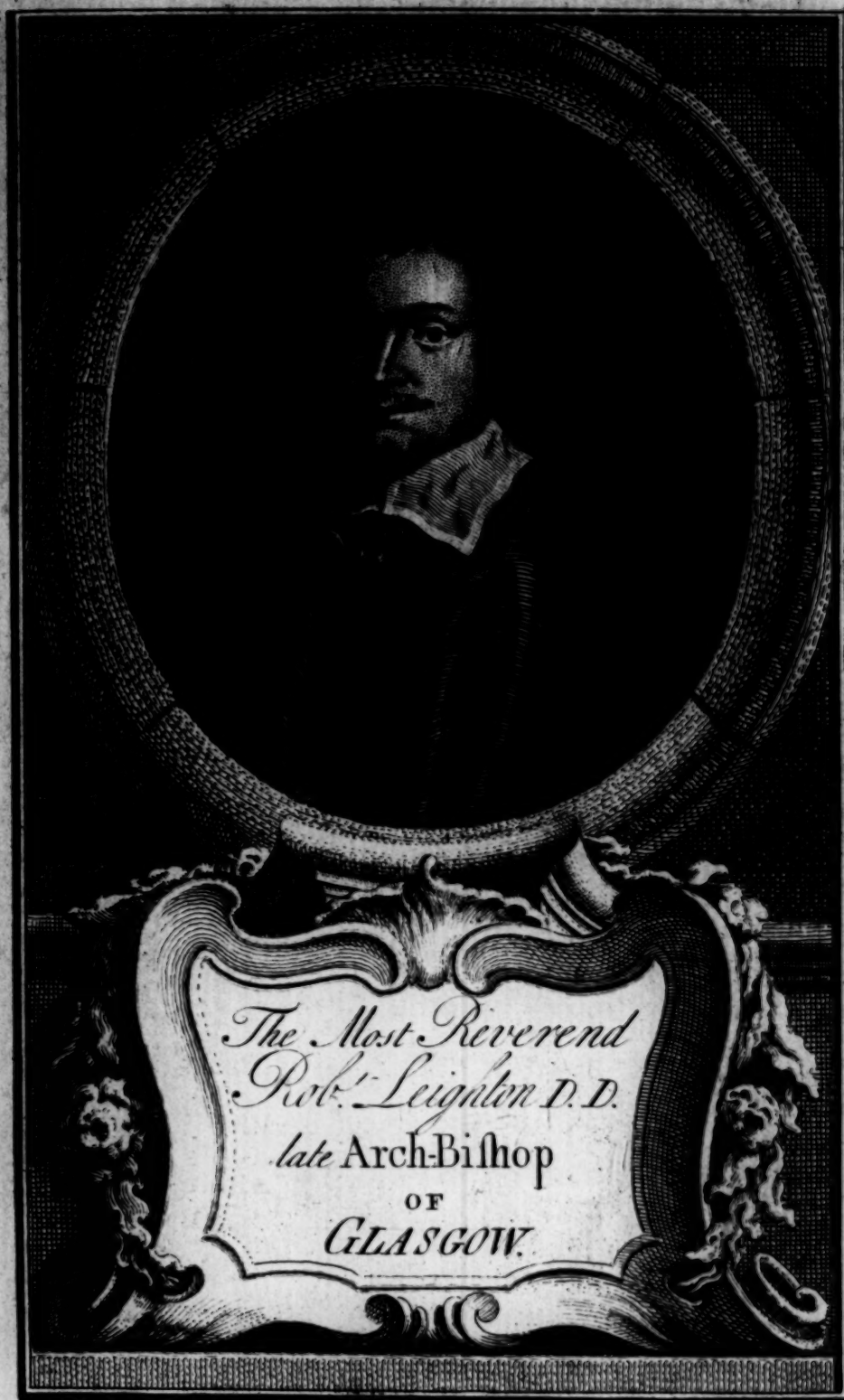
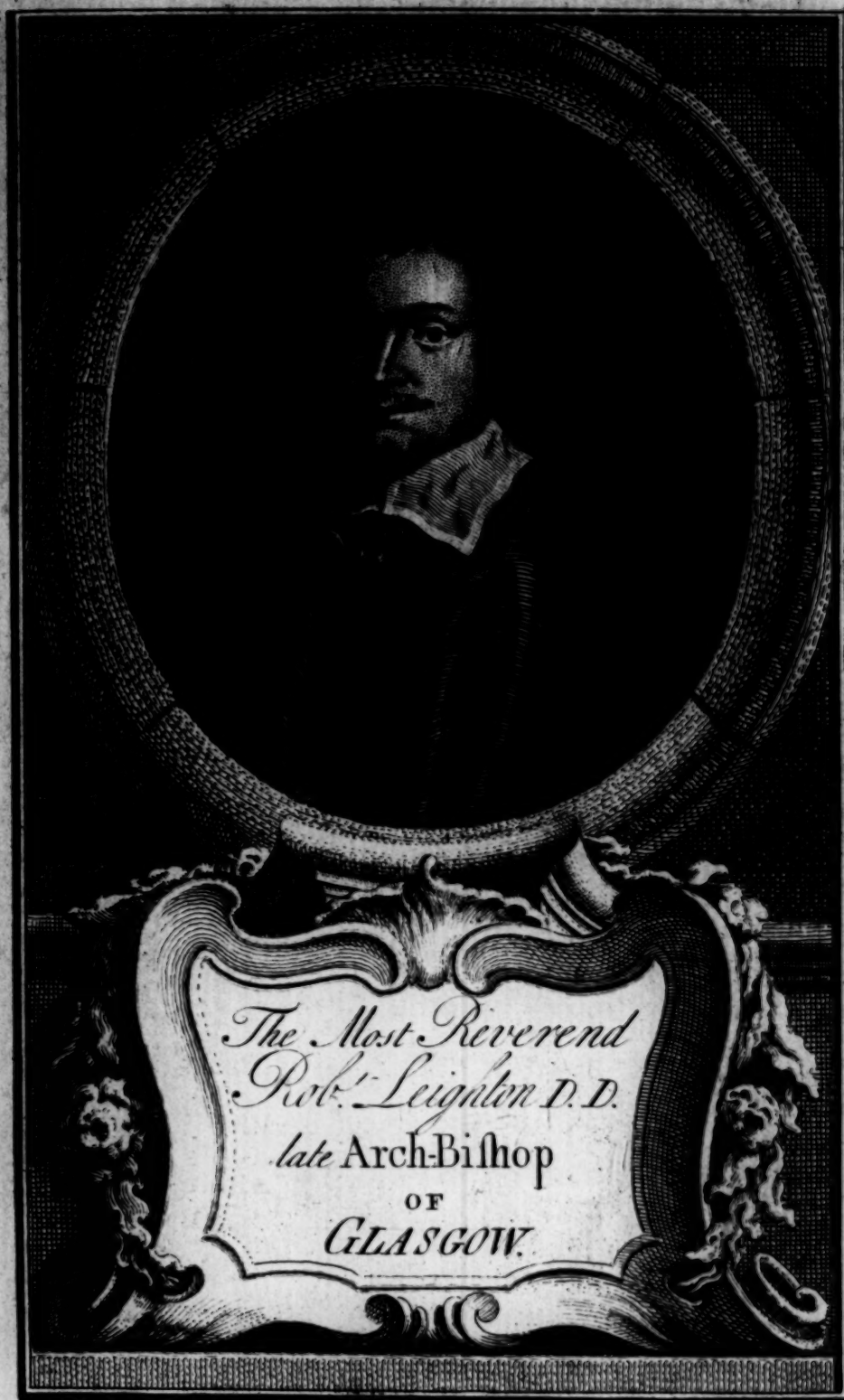




The Most Reverend
Rob^t. Leighton D. D.
late Arch-Bishop
OF
GLASGOW.

Estat. 40 1654



Estat. 40 1654



S E L E C T
W O R K S

O F

Archbishop LEIGHTON.



S E L E C T

W O R K S



Archibishop L E I G H T O N .

S E L E C T
W O R K S
O F

Archbishop LEIGHTON,

With some Letters never before printed.

To which is prefixed

An Account of the AUTHOR's Life and Character.



L O N D O N :

Printed for D. WILSON and T. DURHAM, at
Plato's Head in the *Strand*.

M,DCC,LVIII.

SELECT
WORKS
OF

Archbishop LEIGHTON

With some letters never before printed.



An Account of the

LONDON

Printed by D. Wilson and T. Wilson, in

St. Paul's Church-yard, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXII.

To the R E A D E R.

THE Edition of these Pieces of this *worthy* and *eminent* *Divine*, which I published at *Edinburgh* in 1746 being all sold off, and there being a considerable Demand for the Book, I have been induced to give this new Impression of it, to which are added some Letters of the Author, taken from the Originals in my Possession. Every judicious Reader will easily discover (even in these Fragments of our Author) the same Spirit of *Devotion*, *Benevolence*, and *Humility*, that is to be found in all his Writings. There is a few *Chasms* in some of the Letters, which it was not thought proper should be supplied by another Hand.

London,
Feb. 22, 1758.

DAVID WILSON.

To the R. A. D. M.

THE Edition of 1840 of the
History and Antiquities of the
County of Essex, published at
all sold off, and there being
the demand for the book, I have
reduced to five the price of the
first edition, and added some
the Author, taken from the Original
manuscript. I trust the Reader
will excuse the error in the
name of our Author, the manuscript
being, I believe, from the
pen of the learned in the
There is a few copies of the
edition, which it was not thought
it should be supplied by another hand.

Wm. Wilson

Some Account of the Life and Character of the Author.

AS this Collection of Archbishop *Leighton's* English Works may probably fall into the Hands of many Readers, who will have little Access otherwise to know any thing concerning his Life and Character; the Publisher is hopeful, that the following Account of him, which is faithfully collected from several Writers of Note, and chiefly from his intimate Friend and Companion Dr. *Gilbert Burnet*, late Bishop of *Sarum*, in his *History of his own Times*, will not be unacceptable.

Dr. *ROBERT LEIGHTON*, whose Life we are to give some Account of, was the eldest Son of *Alexander Leighton*, a *Scotsman*, Doctor of Divinity, who wrote two Books for which he was called in question; the first was intituled, *The Looking-glass of holy War*, for which he was made to suffer. But the Book that chiefly brought upon him the Wrath of Bishop *Laud*, and the High Commission Court, was his *Zion's Plea*, or *Appeal to the Parliament*, for which he was condemned in the Star-Chamber to have his Ears cut and his Nose slit, and suffered a cruel Imprisonment the Space of eleven Years.

This *ROBERT* was piously disposed from his Youth. His Father sent him to have his Education in *Scotland*, where he made considerable Proficiency in the learned Languages, *Latin*, *Greek* and *Hebrew*, above his Fellow Students: For *Burnet* says, "He had the greatest Command of the purest *Latin* that ever he knew in any Man." His *Prælectiones Theologicae* are a full Confirmation of this Testimony. He had so great a Quickness of Parts and Vivacity of Apprehension, that he made very great Progress

in his Philosophical and Theological Works. But that which excelled all the rest was, he was possess'd with the highest and noblest Sense of Divine Things that could be seen in any Man. He had a Contempt both of Wealth and Reputation, and seem'd to have the lowest Thoughts of himself possible, wishing that all others should think as meanly of him as he did himself. He bore all Sorts of ill Usage and Reproach like a Man that took pleasure in it. He had so subdued the natural Heat of his Temper, that there was seldom seen in him any Sign of Passion; and he kept himself in such a constant Recollection, that he was never or seldom guilty of speaking an idle Word. There was a visible Tendency in all he said to raise his own Mind, and all he conversed with, to serious Reflections. He seem'd to be in a perpetual Meditation; and through the whole Course of his Life was strict and ascetical, yet he had nothing of the Sourness of Temper that generally possesses Men of that Sort. He was the freest from Superstition, from censuring others, or of imposing his own Methods on them, possible; so that he did not so much as recommend them to others. He said, there was a Diversity of Tempers, and every Man was to watch over his own, and to turn it in the best Manner he could. His Thoughts were lively, oft out of the Way, and surprising, yet just and genuine. And he had laid together in his Memory the greatest Treasure of the best and wisest of all the ancient Sayings of the Heathens, as well as Christians, that I have ever known any Man Master of, and he used them in the aptest Manner possible.

He was bred up in the greatest Aversion to the whole Frame of the Church of *England*; and no wonder he drank it in, considering the unrelenting Cruelties his Father suffered from the Bishops, and the High Commission Court.

When he had finished his Academical Studies in *Scotland*, his Father sent him to travel in foreign Parts;

Parts ; he spent some Years in *France*, and spoke the *French* Language like one born there.

After his Travels he returned to *Scotland*, and having acquitted himself in all the Parts of his Trials for the Ministry, to the great Approbation of his Judges, he got Presbyterian Ordination.

He was ordained Minister at *Newbottle*, in the Presbytery of *Dalkeith*, about four Miles from *Edinburgh*. His Preaching had a Sublimity of Thought and Expression, as appears from his Sermons and other Works in *English*, now re-published at the Desire of good Judges. The Grace and Gravity of his Pronunciation was such, that few heard him without a sensible Emotion. *Burnet* says, " I am sure I never did ; his Stile was rather too fine : But there was a Majesty and Beauty in it that left so deep an Impression, that I cannot yet forget the Sermons I heard him preach thirty years ago ; and yet with this he seemed to look on himself as so ordinary a Preacher, that while he had a Cure he was ready to employ all others." It seems he took great Pains in preparing Discourses for the Publick, for they are very elaborate Performances. He was very bookish, and made a good Choice of Books, which are to be seen in his large Library at *Dumblane*. He did not punctually attend the Presbytery, but chused rather to live in great Retirement, minding only the Care of his own Parish. He preached up a more exact Rule of Life than seemed to many consistent with human Nature ; but his own Practice did even outshine his Doctrine.

In the Year 1648 he declared himself for the Engagement for the King, which brought him to no small Trouble ; but the Earl of *Lothian*, who lived in his Parish, had so high an Esteem for him, that he prevailed with the leading Men not to meddle with him, though he gave Occasion to great Exception : For when some of his Parish were ordered to make publick Profession of Repentance for it, he

told them, they had been in an Expedition in which he believed they had neglected their Duty to God, and had been guilty of Injustice and Violence, of Drunkenness and other Immoralities; and he charged them to repent of these very seriously, without meddling with the Quarrel, or the Grounds of that War. It was a Question asked at the Brethren, both in the classical and provincial Meetings of Ministers, twice in the Year, If they preached the Duties of the Times? And when it was found that Mr. *Leighton* did not, he was quarrelled for this Omission, but said, *If all the Brethren have preached to the Times, may not one poor Brother be suffered to preach on Eternity?* At last, when he could not do the Things imposed upon him any longer, and being unwilling to live in Strife and Contention, he chose in a silent Manner to withdraw from his Charge and the Ecclesiastical Courts, rather than engage in any Disputes with them.

The Mastership of the College of *Edinburgh* sometime after falling vacant, and it being in the Gift of the Magistrates and Town-Council, he was prevailed with to accept of it, because in it he was proposed to be entirely free from meddling with the publick Affairs of Church Judicatories: He continued ten Years in that Post, and was a great Blessing in it; for he discoursed to all the Youth of any Capacity or Distinction in such a taking Manner, that it had great Effect upon many of them: He prelected often to them; and if Crowds broke in, which they were apt to do, he would have gone on in his Harangue in *Latin*, with a Purity and Life that charmed all who understood him.

“ Thus he had lived above twenty Years in *Scotland* in the highest Reputation (says *Burnet*) that “ any Man in my Time ever did in that Kingdom.”

In the Vacation-time, while he was Principal of the College, he made Excursions, and came often to *London*, where he observed all the eminent Men in

Crom-

Cromwell's Court, and in the several Parties then about the City, but never saw any thing among them that pleased him; they were of unquiet and meddling Tempers, and their Discourses were dry and unsavory, full of airy Cant and bombast Swellings. Mr. *Wodrow* gives the following Character of him: "By many he was judged void of any Doctrinal Principles, and his close Correspondence with some of his Relations at *Doway* in Popish Orders, made him suspected, as very much indifferent as to all Persuasions which bear the Name of *Christian*, and was much taken with some of the Popish Mystic Writers, and indeed a *Latitudinarian*, and of an over extensive Charity." I doubt not but his opinion was, that the Government of the Church was ambulatory, and not fixed in the holy Scriptures; which was his Error, and the Error of some great Divines in *England*; *Hooker*, *Stillingsfleet*, and others: But as to the Articles of the Christian Faith, any who have read his *Prælectiones Theologicae*, his Commentary on the first Epistle of *Peter*, and his other Books, will be persuaded that he was sound in the Faith.

As to the Popish Mystic Writers, their Books, abstracting from some Errors in Popery, are so full of Piety, Devotion and Morality, delivered in such an engaging and charming Manner, that all admire their Performances; such as, *Drexellius de aeternitate*, *Thomas à Kempis de imitatione Christi*, Cardinal *Bona's manuductio ad cælum*, and others.

Bishop *Burnet* opens up the Correspondence which he had with *Flanders*, and which was the Occasion of his being suspected. He says, "That *Leighton* sometimes went over to *Flanders*, to see what he could find in the several Orders of the Church of *Rome*. There he found some of *Jansenius's* Followers, who seemed to be Men of extraordinary Tempers, and studied to bring Things, if possible, to the Purity

“ Purity and Simplicity of the Primitive Ages, on
 “ all which his Thoughts were much fixed.”

Shortly after the Restoration of King *Charles II.* it was proposed to him, that an Alteration of the Government of the Church of *Scotland* should be made. The Earl of *Clarendon* and the Duke of *Ormond* of the *English* Peers, and the Earls of *Middleton* and *Glencairn* of the *Scottish* Peers, with *Sharp*, were for the Introduction of Prelacy. Whereupon a Letter was writ to the Privy Council of *Scotland*, intimating the King's Intentions for setting up Episcopacy, and demanding their Advice upon it. The Council, in their Letter to the King, encouraged him to go on, assuring him that the change he intended would give general Satisfaction. This was not true in Fact. Then the next Work was, to seek out proper Persons to be made Bishops, for all the *Scots* Bishops before the Year 1638 were dead, except one *Sydserf*, who had been Bishop of *Galloway*. The *English* Bishops had an Aversion to all that had been engaged in the Covenant; however *Sharp*, who had taken the Covenant, nay, the Tender also, abjuring the Race of *Stuarts*, and was so much confided in by the Church of *Scotland* as to be their Agent for Presbytery, he being sent by them to the King, first in *Holland*, and afterward at *London*, betrayed their Cause, and prevailed so far, that the Choice of fit Persons should be left to him. Messrs. *Sharp*, *Fairfowl* and *Hamilton* were sent for, who went up to *England*, October 10th, 1661. *Leighton* came to *London* from *Bath*, having been there some time for his Health. *Sharp* got the Archbishoprick of *St. Andrews* secured for himself, *Fairfowl* was desired to be Archbishop of *Glasgow*, *Hamilton* (Brother to the Lord *Belhaven*) for *Galloway*, for *Sydserf* was to be removed to *Orkney*: And *Leighton* made Choice of *Dumblane*, a small Diocese, as well as a little Revenue, not exceeding 120*l.* *p. r.* *Annum*; but the Deanry of the Chapel Royal was annexed to that See.

At

At the Consecration of these Persons there was great Feasting and Jollity ; with this *Leighton* was struck, and said, *It had not such an Appearance of Seriousness or Piety as became the new modelling of a Church.* Bishop *Burnet* proceeds in his Narration : “ I bear still, *says he*, the greatest Veneration for the Memory of that Man, that I do for any Person ; and reckon my early Knowledge of him, which happened the Year after this, and my long and intimate Conversation with him, that continued to his Death, for twenty three Years, amongst the greatest Blessings of my Life, and for which I know I must give an Account to God in the great Day in a most particular Manner. And yet, though I know this Account of his Promotion may seem a Blemish upon him, I would not conceal it, being resolved to write of all Persons and Things with all possible Candour. The Papists had Hopes of him at this Time, having talked of some Points of Popery with the Freedom of an abstracted and speculative Man, not knowing any thing of the Design of bringing in Popery ; yet he expressed another Sense of the Matter when he came to see it was really intended to be brought in amongst us. He then spoke of Popery in the Complex at much another Rate : And he seemed to have more Zeal against it, than I thought was in his Nature with relation to any Points in Controversy ; for his Abstraction made him seem cold in all these Matters. But he gave all who conversed with him a very different View of Popery, when he saw we were really in Danger of coming under the Power of a Religion, *that had, as he used to say, much of the Wisdom that was earthly, sensual and devilish, but nothing in it of the Wisdom that was from above, and was pure and peaceable.* He did indeed think the Corruptions and Cruelties of Popery were such gross and odious Things, that nothing could have maintained
“ that

“ that Church under these just and visible Prejudices,
 “ but the several Orders among them, which had an
 “ Appearance of Mortification and Contempt of the
 “ World, and with all the Truth that was among
 “ them, maintained a Face of Piety and Devotion.
 “ He also thought that the great and fatal Error of
 “ the Reformation was, that more of those Houses,
 “ and of that Course of Life, free from the Entan-
 “ glements of Vows, and other Mixtures, was not
 “ preserved; so that the Protestant Churches had
 “ neither Places of Education, nor Retreat for Men
 “ of mortified Tempers.”

Leighton made some Attempts to work up *Sharp* to two Designs, which possessed him most: The one was, to try what could be done towards uniting the Presbyterians and them; he offered *Usher's Reduction*, as the Plan upon which they ought to form their Schemes. The other was, to try how they could raise Men to a truer and higher Sense of Piety, and bring the Worship of that Church out of their *extempore* Methods into more Order, and so to prepare them to a more regular Way of Worship; which he thought was of much more Importance than a Form of Government. But he was amazed, when he observed that *Sharp* had neither formed any Scheme, nor seemed so much as willing to talk of any.

Leighton came very quickly to lose all Heart and Hope of doing much Good by this Change, because there appeared in the whole Progress of it such cross Characters of an angry Providence, that how fully soever he was satisfied in his own Mind, as to Episcopacy itself, yet it seemed that God was against them, and that they were not like to be the Men that should build up his Church, so that the Strugglings about it seemed to him like a fighting against God. He who had the greatest Hand in it, proceeded with so much Dissimulation, and the rest of the Order were so mean and selfish, and the Earl of *Middleton*, with the other secular Men that conducted it, were so

so openly impious and vicious, that it did cast a Reproach upon every thing relating to Religion, to see it managed by such Instruments.

Soon after their Consecration, the Bishops came down to *Scotland* all in one Coach; but *Leighton* being weary of them, and finding they intended to be received at *Edinburgh* with some Pomp, left them at *Morpeth*, and came to *Edinburgh* a few Days before them. He hated all the Appearances of Vanity; he would not have the Title of *Lord* given him by his Friends, and was not easy when others forced it upon him: This provoked the other Bishops, and looked like Singularity and Affectation, and furnished these that were prejudiced against him with a specious Appearance, to represent him as a Man of odd Notions and Practices. The Lord Chancellor, with all the Nobility and Privy Counsellors then at *Edinburgh*, went out, together with the Magistracy of the City, and brought the Bishops in, as in Triumph. *Burnet* says, "he looked on, and thought there was something in the Pomp of that Entry that did not look like the Humility that became their Function."

The Session of Parliament came on *April* 1662, a Piece of Respect was put on the Bishops, by sending some of every State to invite them to come and take their Seats, they all came except *Leighton*: And indeed he never came to Parliament, but when there was something before them that related to Religion, or to the Church.

For a Proof of the Loyalty of Presbyterian Ministers, it was resolved to tender them the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy, that had been enacted in the former Parliament: The Ministers to whom it was tendered, agreed to take it, with an Explication, which was presented to the House; but as soon as it was read, there were many hard Speeches on it, as putting a Restriction on the Oath framed by the Parliament. At this Meeting, which was the only Time that *Leighton* appeared in Parliament, he with much
Zeal

Zeal pressed that it might be accepted: *For*, said he, *the Words of the Oath were certainly capable of a bad Sense; that in Compassion to Papists, a limited Sense had been put upon them in England, and he thought that a like Tenderneſs ſhould be ſhewn to Proteſtants, eſpecially when the Scruple was juſt, and there was an Oath in the Caſe, in which the Matter certainly ought to be made clear. To act otherwiſe, looked like laying Snares for People, and the making them Offenders for a Word.* *Sharp*, in answer to him, ſaid, “It was below the Dignity of a Government to make Acts “to ſatisfy the weak Scruples of peeviſh Men: It “ill became them, who had impoſed their Covenants “on all People, without any Explication, and had “forced all to take it, now to expect ſuch extraordinary Favours.” *Leighton* inſiſted, *That for that very Reason it ought to be done, that all People might ſee a Difference between the mild Proceedings of the Government now, and their Severity: And that it ill became the very ſame Perſons, who had complained of that Rigour, now to practice it themſelves; for thus it may be ſaid, The World goes mad by Turns.*

Theſe Miniſters were committed to cloſe Priſon, three in one Chamber, and three in another, and none permitted to have Acceſs to them for ſeveral Weeks. Great Pains were uſed with them to ſwear the Oath abſolutely, as it ſtood. *Leighton* was ſent to them, who uſed all his Eloquence and Art, but without Succeſs: They charged and checked him with Deſertion, and laying Stumbling-blocks before his Brethren.

In the Year 1665, the Proceedings in *Scotland* by the Eccleſiaſtical High Commiſſion were ſo violent againſt all that would not conform, that *Leighton* would have no Hand in them, but had rather framed a Reſolution to leave his Biſhoprick: He went to *London* to give the King an Account of theſe Proceedings, which, he ſaid, were ſo violent, that he could not concur in the planting of the Chriſtian Religion

ligion itself in such a Manner, much less a Form of Government; he therefore begged Leave to quit his Bishoprick, and to retire, for he thought he was in some Sort accessory to the Violences that were done by others, since he was one of them, and all was pretended to be done to establish them and their Order. The King seemed to be touched with the State the Country was in; he spake very severely of *Sharp*, and assured *Leighton* he would quickly come to other Measures, and put a Stop to these violent Methods; but he would by no means suffer him to quit his Bishoprick. So the King gave Orders that the Ecclesiastical Commission should be discontinued, and signified his Pleasure, that another way of proceeding was necessary for his Affairs.

In the West and South of *Scotland* great Severities were used, but no Violences were committed in *Leighton's* Diocese: He went round it continually every Year, preaching and catechising from Parish to Parish: He continued in his private and ascetick Course of Life, and gave all his Income, beyond the small Expences of his own Person, to the Poor: He studied to raise in his Clergy a greater Sense of spiritual Matters, and of the Care of Souls; and was in all Respects a burning and shining Light, highly esteem'd by the greater Part of his Diocese: Even the Presbyterians were much mollified, if not overcome, by his mild and heavenly Course of Life. *Mr. Wodrow* says, "Every Body knew, that while *Leighton* was Bishop of *Dumblane*, he had as scandalous and ignorant a Clergy as in *Scotland*, and yet there he never offered to turn one of them out: As to turning them out by Deposition, he might meet with Difficulties from their Friends, and likewise from the other Bishops; but surely he cannot be blamed for their Ignorance and Negligence of their Duty, since he gave them so good Example." *Mr. Wodrow* afterwards owns, that when *Leighton* was Archbishop of *Glasgow*, he found that Country full of

of Complaints of the Scandals of his Clergy there ; and appointed a purging Committee to take Trial of such Complaints.

While he was at *Dumblane* he visited once a Year all the Churches of his Diocese, preached and heard the Minister preach, gave liberally to the Poor ; and if any of his Churches were vacant, if he could, he supplied them himself. He connived at Mr. *Pitcairn* in *Dron*, heard him preach, but would not preach himself, lest he should have made Mr. *Pitcairn*'s Hearers take Offence at him, they being all bigotted Presbyterians ; so that by his Favour Mr. *Pitcairn* continued at *Dron* till the Test.

In the West of *Scotland* there was a Set of ignorant and scandalous Clergy ; *Burnet*, Archbishop of *Glasgow*, had ordained the most of them : They were so vicious that there was no supporting of them ; many of them made Bargains with their Parishes, and left them, hoping to be provided in *Ireland*. Thus many Parishes became vacant. My Lord *Tweeddale*, whom *Lauderdale* trusted most, laid out himself for redressing the many Complaints that were brought against the Clergy in those Parts ; and looking on *Leighton* as the greatest and best Man among the Bishops, recommended him to the King to be set at the Head of all Church Affairs, that a Set of Men of another Stamp might be sent to fill up these Vacancies. At this Time, *Anno* 1667, *Leighton* was prevailed on to go to *London*, where he had two Audiences of the King, and laid before him the Madness of the former Administration of Church Affairs, and the Necessity of turning to more moderate Counsels ; he proposed a Comprehension of the Presbyterians, by altering the Terms of Law a little, and by such Abatements as might preserve the whole for the future, by granting something for the present. *Burnet* writes, that in the Year 1669 *Leighton* talked to him of the Measures of Moderation and Comprehension, and says, that he was the only Person among the Bishops

Bishops that declared for them, and proposed that a Treaty should be set on Foot for accommodating Differences, and changing the Laws that carried Episcopal Authority much higher than any of the Bishops themselves put in Practice. He proposed a Scheme as he thought might have taken in the soberest Men of Presbyterian Principles, reckoning that if once the Schism could be healed, and Order restored, it might be easy to bring Things into such Management, that the Concessions then to be offered should do no great Hurt at present, and should die with that Generation. He observed the extraordinary Concessions made by the *African Church* to the *Donatists*, and this made him go very far in extenuating the Episcopal Authority. He proposed that the Church should be governed by the Bishops and their Clergy, mixing together in their Church Judicatories, in which the Bishop should act only as their President, and be determined by the Majority of their Presbyters, both in Matters of Jurisdiction and Ordination, and that the Presbyterians should be allowed, when they sat down first in these Judicatories, to declare that their sitting under a Bishop was submitted to by them only for Peace's sake, with a Reservation of their Opinion with relation to any such Precedency, and that no negative Vote should be claimed by the Bishop. That Bishops should ordain Persons with the Concurrence of the Presbytery. That Provincial Synods sit in Course every third Year, or oftner, if the King should summon them, in which Complaints of the Bishops should be received, and they should be censured as well as other People, and that in a fix'd Court, which was to consist of Bishops and Deans, and two chosen from every Presbytery. As for the Negative, it might be lodged in the King's Name with some secular Person, who should interpose as often as the Bishop saw it was expedient to use it. He proposed farther, that a Treaty might be set on Foot for bringing the Presbyterians to accept of these

Concessions. *Burnet* says, he was sent to propose the Scheme to *Hu'chison*, who was esteemed the learnedest Man among them, and to talk of it as a Notion of his own; but he looked on it as a Project that would never take, and being but one of many, he avoided to declare himself.

The next Thing under Consideration was, how to dispose of the many Vacancies, and how to put a Stop to Conventicles. *Leighton* proposed, that they should still be vacant while the Treaty was on Foot, that the Presbyterians may see that the Government was in earnest to have them serve in the Church, when so many Places were kept open for them. The Earl of *Tweddale* thought the Treaty would run into too great a Length, and therefore he proposed the granting some of the outed Ministers Leave to go and serve in these Parishes, by an Act of Indulgence. *Leighton* was against this, for he thought nothing would bring on the Presbyterians to a Treaty, so much as the Hopes of being again suffered to return to their Benefices. *Burnet* says, he was desired to go into the Western Parts, and to give a true Account of Matters as he found them there: Many of the more moderate of them came to him and talked with him, who thought, that if they were put in vacant Churches, the People would be tamer. He having got the best Information of the State of the Country, writes a long Account of all that he heard to the Lord *Tweddale*; and concluded it with an Advice, to put some of the more moderate of the Presbyterians into the vacant Churches. The Letter was so well liked, that it was read to the King; and it was said, that he was the Man that went most entirely into *Leighton's* Maxims.

The King wrote a Letter to the Privy Council, ordering them to indulge such of the Presbyterians as were moderate and loyal, so far as to suffer them to serve in vacant Churches, though they did not submit to the present Establishment: And he requir-
ed

d them to set them such Rules as might preserve Order and Peace, and to look well to the Execution of them. And as for such as could not be provided to Churches at that Time, he ordered a Pension of 20*l.* Sterling a Year to be paid every one of them, as long as they lived orderly. Nothing followed on the second Article of this Letter: The Presbyterians looked on this as the King's Hire to be silent, and not to do their Duty; and none of them would accept of it. But as to the first Part of the Letter, on the first Council-day after it was read, twelve of the Ministers were indulged: They had Parishes assigned them; and about thirty more were afterwards indulged in the same Manner; and then a Stop was put to it for some time. With the Warrants that they had for their Churches, there was a Paper of Rules likewise put in their Hands. *Hutchison*, in all their Names, made a Speech to the Council. He began with decent Expressions of Thanks to the King and their Lordships. He said, they should at all Times give such Obedience to Laws and Orders, as could stand with a good Conscience. And so they were dismissed. As for those of them that were allowed to go to the Churches where they had served before, no Difficulty could be made; but those of them that were named to other Churches, would not enter on the serving them, till the Church Sessions and the Inhabitants of the Parish met, and made Choice of them for their Pastors, and gave them a Call to serve among them.

When this Indulgence came to be discanted upon, it appeared to be against Law; for by the Act *restoring Episcopacy*, none were capable of Benefices but such as should own the Authority of Bishops, and be instituted by them. And now the Episcopal Party, who were wont to put all Authority in the King, as long as he was for them, began to talk, that the King's Power was bounded by Law, and that these Proceedings were the trampling of Law under Foot.

Burnet, Archbishop of *Glasgow*, and his Clergy were out of Measure enraged at the Indulgence. He held a Synod at *Glasgow*, Anno 1669, when it was moved, that an Address might be drawn up, representing to the King the Miseries they were under, occasioned by the Indulgence. They complained of it as illegal, and as like to be fatal to the Church. This was, according to the Words in some of the Acts of Parliament, as misrepresenting the King's Proceedings, in order to the alienating the Hearts of his Subjects from him, which had been made capital. *Ross*, who was afterwards Archbishop of *Glasgow*, drew the Address, a Copy of this was procured by indirect Methods and sent up to Court: And as soon as the King saw it, he said, it was a new *Western Remonstrance*; and ordered, that *Burnet* should not be suffered to come to Parliament, and that he should be proceeded against as far as Law could carry the Matter. *Burnet* being on other Accounts obnoxious, they intended to frighten him to resign his Bishoprick.

When the Parliament met, the Supremacy was carried very high; for the Act declared the settling all Things relating to the external Government of the Church, was a Right of the Crown. *Leighton* was against this Act, and got some Words altered in it; yet though he was very averse to it, he gave his Vote for it, not having sufficiently considered the Extent of the Words, and the Consequences that might follow many of the Episcopal Clergy, *Nairn* and *Chartres* in particular, who thought it plainly made the King our Pope; and the Presbyterians said it put him in Christ's Stead. *Leighton* told *Burnet*, that he was sure the Words, *Ecclesiastical Matters*, were put in after the Draught and Form of the Act was agreed on. It was generally charged on *Lauderdale*.

By this Act of Supremacy he could turn out Bishops at pleasure; and it had its first Effect on *Burnet*, who was offered a Pension if he would resign, but if he stood out was severely threatened; he complied,

plied, and returned to a private State, in which he lived four Years.

The Earls of *Lauderdale* and *Tweeddale* pressed *Leighton* to accept of the See of *Glasgow*, but he declined it with great Aversion; nothing moving him to hearken to it, but the Hopes of bringing about the Accommodation that was proposed, in which he had all Assistance promised him from the Court. The King ordered him to be sent for to Court; upon his coming to *London*, *Lauderdale's* Temper was much inflamed, he was become fierce and untractable; but *Tweeddale* made every thing as easy to him as possible. Having turned out Archbishop *Burnet*, it concerned them much to get an eminent Man in his Room, who should order Matters with Moderation.

Anno 1670 *Leighton* proposed to the King his Scheme of Accommodation. *Leighton's* Paper was in some Places corrected by Sir *Robert Murray*, and was turned into Instructions; by which *Lauderdale* was authorized to pass the Concessions, that were to be offered, into Laws.

Leighton, though he undertook the Administration of the See of *Glasgow*, yet it was a Year after this before he was prevailed on to be translated thither. When he came there he held a Synod, in which nothing was to be heard but Complaints of Desertion and ill Usage.

In a Sermon, and in several Discourses both publick and private, he exhorted them to look up more to God, and consider themselves as Ministers of the Cross of Christ, to bear Contempt and ill Usage with Patience, and to lay aside all the Appetites of Revenge, to humble themselves before God, and to have many Days for secret Fasting and Prayer, to meet often, that they might question one another in these holy Exercises. This was a new Strain to the Clergy, to which they had not been accustomed.

When this was over, he went round some Parts of the Country to the most eminent of the indulged Ministers,

nisters, and carried *Burnet* with him : His Business was to persuade them to hearken to Propositions of Peace, and told them that some of them would be sent for to *Edinburgh*, where Terms would be offered them to make up Differences, and if they hearkened to them, they would be turned into Laws, and all the Vacancies would be filled by their Brethren. This they received with Indifference and Neglect. *Hutchison* said, *It was a Thing of gneeral Concern, and they were but single Men.*

There were Letters written to six of them to come to Town : When they came, there was a long Conference between *Leighton* and them, before *Lauderdale*, *Rotbes*, *Tweeddale* and *Kincardine*. *Sharp* would not be present, but ordered *Paterfson*, afterwards Archbishop of *Glasgow*, to hear all and bring him an Account of what passed. *Leighton* laid before the Mischief of Schism, and said, that every one ought to do all he can to heal the wide Breach ; that they had Moderators among them, that the King might name these, and make them constant ; and that in submitting to this, they should be allowed to declare their Opinion against this Precedency. *Hutchison* said, “ That their Opinion for a Parity among the Clergy “ was well known, and that the Precedency now “ spoken of had made Way to a Lordly Dominion “ in the Church ; and desired some Time might be “ given them to consider well of the Propositions “ now made, and that they might have the King’s “ Leave to meet.” This was granted. There was a second Conference, in which Matters were more fully opened and pressed home, but without Effect : *Sharp* cried out, *That Episcopacy was to be undermined, since the Negative was to be let go.*

In the Year 1672 *Leighton* resolved to retire and leave his See ; for *Sharp*, and his Instruments, from *Leighton*’s Moderation, did complain. He concluded he could do no Good on either Side, he gained no Ground on the Presbyterians, and was suspected,
nay

may hated, by the Episcopal Party, and therefore resolved to retire from all publick Employments and to spend the rest of his Days in a Corner, and to give himself wholly to Prayer and Meditation, since he could not carry on his great Designs of healing and reforming the Church, which he had so much at Heart: He said, his Work seemed to be at an End; he had no more to do, unless he had a Mind to please himself with the lazy enjoying a good Revenue. He had gathered together many Instances out of Church History, of Bishops that had left their Sees and retired from the World, and was much pleased with these. He followed *Lauderdale* to Court, and begged Leave to resign his Archbishoprick; but when *Lauderdale* would by no means consent this, he desired he might be allowed to do it within a Year, who moved the King to promise, That if he did not change his Mind, he would then accept of his Resignation: He came back much pleased with what he had thus obtained.

Leighton came up to *London*, at the End of the Year 1673, to quit his Archbishoprick; his Resignation was accepted, and *Burnet* made such Submissions that he was restored.

Leighton retired to a private House in *Suffex*, where he lived ten Years in a most heavenly Manner, and with a shining Conversation.

When Lord *Perth* came to *London* to be made Lord Chancellor of *Scotland*, Dr. *Burnet* had a very earnest Message from him, desiring by his means to see *Leighton*. *Burnet* wrote so earnestly to him that he came to *London*, who was amazed to see him, at above Seventy Years of Age, look so fresh and well. His Hair was still black, and all his Motions were lively. He had the same Quickness of Thought and Strength of Memory, but above all, the same Heat and Life of Devotion he had ever seen in him. When *Burnet* took Notice to him, upon his first seeing him, how well he looked, he said, *He was very near his End for all*

all that ; and his Work and Journey both were now almost done. The next Day he was taken with an Oppression, and as it seemed with Cold and with Stitches, which was indeed a Pleurisy.

The next Day *Leighton* sunk so, that both Speech and Sense went away of a sudden ; and he continued panting above twelve Hours, and then died without Pangs or Convulsions, in 1684.

Bishop *Burnet* gives the following Character of Bishop *Leighton* in the Conclusion of his Pastoral Care.

“ I have now laid together with great Simplicity
 “ what has been the chief Subject of my Thoughts
 “ for above thirty Years. I was formed to them by
 “ a *Bishop* (meaning our Author) that had the greatest
 “ Elevation of Soul, the largest Compass of
 “ Knowledge, the most mortified and heavenly Disposition,
 “ that I ever yet saw in *Mortal* ; that had
 “ the greatest Parts as well as Virtue, with the perfectest
 “ Humility that I ever saw in Man ; and had
 “ a *Sublime* Strain in preaching, with so grave a
 “ Gesture, and such a Majesty both of Thought, of
 “ Language, and of Pronunciation, that I never
 “ once saw a wandering Eye where he preached, and
 “ have seen whole Assemblies often melt in Tears
 “ before him , and of whom I can say with great
 “ Truth, that in a free and frequent Conversation
 “ with him for above two and twenty Years, I never
 “ knew him say an *Idle Word*, that had not a direct
 “ Tendency to *Edification* ; and I never once saw
 “ him in any other Temper, but that which I wished
 “ to be in, in the last Moments of my Life.”

And the same Writer in the History of his own Time has the following Passage concerning our Author after his Death.

“ Thus I lost him who had been for so many Years
 “ the chief Guide of my whole Life. He had lived
 “ ten Years in *Suffex* in great Privacy, dividing his
 “ Time wholly between Study and Retirement, and
 “ the

“ the doing of Good ; for in the Parish where he
“ lived, and in the Parishes round about he was al-
“ ways employed in Preaching, and reading Prayers.
“ He distributed all he had in Charities, chusing ra-
“ ther to have it go through other Peoples Hands
“ than his own ; for (says Burnet) I was his Almo-
“ ner in *London*. He had gathered a well chosen
“ Library of curious as well as useful Books, which
“ he left to the Diocese of *Dumblane*, for the Use of
“ the Clergy there, that Country being ill provided
“ with Books. He lamented often to me (says the
“ same accurate and judicious author) the Stupidity
“ that he observed among the Commons of *England*,
“ who seemed to be much more insensible in the
“ Matters of Religion, than the Commons of *Scot-*
“ *land* were. He retained still a peculiar Inclination
“ to *Scotland* : And if he had seen any Prospect of
“ doing Good there, he would have gone and lived
“ and died among them. In the short Time that the
“ Affairs of *Scotland* were in the Duke of *Monmouth's*
“ Hands, that Duke had been possessed with such an
“ Opinion of him, that he moved the King to write
“ to him, to go, and at least live in *Scotland*, if he
“ would not engage in a Bishoprick there : But that
“ fell with that Duke's Credit. He was in his last
“ Years turned to a greater Severity against Popery,
“ than I had imagined a Man of his Temper and of
“ his Largeness in Point of Opinion was capable of.
“ He spoke of the Corruptions of the secular Spirit,
“ and of the Cruelty that appeared in that Church,
“ with an extraordinary Concern ; and lamented the
“ shameful Advances that we seemed to be making
“ towards Popery. He did this with a Tenderness
“ and with an Edge that I did not expect from so
“ recluse and mortified a Man. He looked on the
“ State the Church of *England* was in, with very me-
“ lancholy Reflexions, and was very uneasy at an
“ Expression then much used, *That it was the best*
“ *constituted Church in the World* : He thought it was
truly

“ truly so, with relation to the Doctrine, the Wor-
 “ ship, and the main Part of our Government; but
 “ as to the Administration, both with relation to the
 “ Ecclesiastical Courts and the Pastoral Care, he
 “ looked on it as one of the most corrupt he had ever
 “ seen. He thought we looked like a fair Carcase of
 “ a Body without a Spirit, without that Zeal, that
 “ Strictness of Life, and that Laboriousness in the
 “ Clergy that (says *Burnet*) became us.”

There were two remarkable Circumstances in his Death. He used often to say, That if he were to chuse a Place to die in, it should be an Inn, it looking like a Pilgrim's going home, to whom this World was all as an Inn, and who was weary of the Noise and Confusion in it. He added, that the officious Tenderness and Care of Friends was an Entanglement to a dying Man; and that the unconcerned Attendance of those that could be procured in such a Place, would give less Disturbance. And he obtained what he desired, for he died at the *Bell Inn* in *Warwick-Lane*.

Another Circumstance was, that while he was Bishop in *Scotland*, he took what his Tenants were pleased to pay to him: So that there was a great Arrear due, which was raised slowly by one whom he left in Trust with his Affairs there; and the last Payment that he could expect from thence was returned up to him about six Weeks before his Death: So that his Provision and Journey failed both at once,

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MANY and great are the Evils that lodge within the Heart of Man, and they come forth abundantly both by the Tongue and by the Hand, yet the Heart is not emptied of them; yea, the more it vents them outwardly, the more they increase within. Well might He that knew the Heart so well, call it an *evil Treasure*. We find the Prophet *Ezekiel*, in his 8th Chap. led by the Lord in Vision to *Jerusalem*, to view the Sins of the *Jews* that remained in time of the Captivity: When He had shewed him one Abomination, He caused him to dig through the Wall, to enter and discover more; and so directed him several times, from one Place to another, and still said, *I will shew thee yet greater Abominations*. Thus is it with those, whom the Lord leads into an Examination of their own Hearts (for Men are usually strangers to themselves) by the Light of his Word and Spirit going before them, He lets them see Heaps of Abominations in every Room, and the vilest in the most retired and darkest Corners: And truly, should he leave them there, they would despair of Remedy. No, He makes this Discovery on purpose that they should sue to him for Help. Do so then, as many as have taken any Notice of the Evils of your own Hearts: Tell the Lord they're his own Works; *He formed the Heart of Man within him*, and they are his own Choice too, *My Son give me thy Heart*. Intreat him to redress all those Abuses where-

with

with Satan and Sin have filled it, and then, to take Possession of it himself, for therein consists its Happiness. This is, or should be, a main End of our Resortings to his House and Service. Wrong not yourselves so far as to turn these serious Exercises of Religion into an idle Divertisement. What a Happiness were it, if every Time you come to his solemn Worship, some of your strongest Sins did receive a new Wound, and some of your weakest Graces a new Strength!

JAMES III. 17.

But the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy.

GOD* doth know, that in the Day that ye shall eat thereof, your Eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil, was the first hissing of that old Serpent, by which he poisoned Mankind in the Root. Man not contented with the Impression of God's Image in which he was created, lost it by catching at a Shadow: Climing higher than his Station, he fell far below it: Seeking to be more than Man, to become as God, he made himself less than Man: He lodged not a Night in Honour, but became as the Beasts that perish, Ps. xlix. 12. Ever since, Nature's best Wisdom is full of Impurity, Turbulency and Distemper; nor can any thing rectify it, but a Wisdom from above, that both cleanseth and composeth the Soul; *it is first pure, and then peaceable.*

This Epistle, as some that follow, is called *General*, both by reason of the Dispersion of the Parties to whom it is address'd, and the Universality of the Subject which it treats: Containing a great Number (if not all) of the necessary Directions and Comforts of a Christian's Life, both from the active and passive Part of it. 'Tis evident, that the Apostle's main De-

* Gen. iii. 5.

sign is, to arm the dispersed *Jews* against all Kinds of Temptations, both these of *Affliction*, in the 1st Chap. at the 2d Verse, and *sinful Temptations*, Ver. 13th. And having discoursed of two special Means of strengthening them against both, *speaking to God in Prayer*, and *bearing God speak in his Word*, in the two last Verses of that 1st Chap. he recommends, as chief Duties of Religion, and sure Evidences of Integrity in Religion, first *Meekness*, and *Moderation* chiefly in their Speeches, and then *Charity* and *Purity* in their Actions; insisting largely upon the latter, in the 2d Chap. and upon the former, the ruling of the Tongue, in this 3d Chap. And here, towards the End of it, he shews the true opposite Spring of Miscarriage in Speech and Action, and of right ordering and regulating of both. Evil Conversation, Strifes and Envyings, are the Fruits of a base Wisdom that is *earthly, sensual* and *devilish*, Ver. 15th; but *Purity, Meekness* and *Mercy*, are the proper Effects and certain Signs of heavenly Wisdom.

The Wisdom that is from above, is *first pure*; its Gentleness can agree with any thing except *Impurity*: Then it is *peaceable*, it offends nobody, except *Purity* offend them: It is not raging and boisterous. It is not only *pure*, being void of that Mire and Dirt, which the Wicked are said to cast out like the Sea, *Isa. lvii. 20.* but *peaceable* likewise, not swelling, and restless like the Sea, as is there said of the Wicked. Nor is it only *peaceable* negatively, *not offending*, but as the Word bears *εἰρηνικὴ* *pacifick*, disposed to make and seek *Peace*; and as it readily offends none, so it is not easily offended. 'Tis *gentle* and *moderate* *πραῦς*, and if offended, *εὐπειθής*, *easily intreated* to forgive: And as it easily passeth by Mens Offences, so it doth not pass by, but *looks upon their Distresses and Wants*, as full of Compassion, as it is free from unruly and distemper'd Passions. Nor rests it in an affecting Sympathy, its *Mercy* is helpful, full of *Mercy* and *good Fruits*: And it both *forgives* and *pities*, and *gives*:

without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy, [*ἀδίαψιλον καὶ ἀνυπόκριτον*] the Word *ἀδίαψιλον* may as well bear another Sense, no less suiting both with this Wisdom and these its other Qualities; that is, *not taking upon it a censorious discerning and judging of others*. They that have most of this Wisdom, are least rigid to those that have less of it. I know no better Evidence of Strength in Grace, than to bear much with those that are weak in it. And lastly, as it spares the Infirmities of others, so it makes not false and vain Shews of its own Excellencies, 'tis *without Hypocrisy*. This denies two Things, both *Disimulation* and *Ostentation*. The Art of *Dissembling* or *Hypocrite-craft*, is no part of this Wisdom: And for the other, *Ostentation*, surely the Air of Applause is too light a Purchase for solid Wisdom. The Works of this Wisdom may be seen, yea, they should be seen, and may possibly be now and then commended; but they should not be done for that low End, either to be seen or to be commended. Surely no, being of so noble Extraction; this having descended from Heaven, will be little careful for the Estimation of those that are of the Earth, and are but too often of the Earth, earthly.

The due Order of handling these Particulars more fully, cannot well be miss'd: Doubtless the *Subject, Wisdom from above*, requires our *first* Consideration, next the *excellent Qualities* that are attributed to it, and lastly their *Order* is to be considered; the rather because so clearly exprest, *first pure, then peaceable, &c.*

[*Wisdom from above.*] There be two Things in that: There's the general Term of *Wisdom* common to divers sorts of Wisdom, tho' most eminently and truly belonging to this best Wisdom. Then there is the *Birth* or *Original* of this Wisdom, serving as its Difference to specify and distinguish it from all the rest, *Wisdom from above*. *Wisdom* in the general is a very plausible Word among Men: Who is there that would not willingly pass for wise, yea, often those that

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that are least of all such are most desirous to be accounted such; and where this fails them, they usually make up that Want in their own Conceit and strong Opinion. Nor do Men only thus love the Reputation of Wisdom, but they naturally desire to be wise, as they do to be happy; yet through corrupt Nature's Blindness, they do as naturally mistake and fall short both of the one and the other; and being once wrong, the more Progress they make, they are further out of the way: And pretending to Wisdom in a false way, they still befool themselves, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. i. 22. φάσονται εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν, Professing themselves to be wise, they become Fools.*

Our Apostle, *ver. 15.* speaking of that wicked Wisdom, that is fruitful of Wrongs, Strifes, and Debates, and that is only abusively to be called *Wisdom*, shews what kind of Wisdom it is, by three notable Characters, *Earthly, Natural, and Devilish*; which tho' they be here jointly attributed to one and the same Subject, yet we make Use of them to signify some Differences of false Wisdom. There is an *Infernal*, or *Devilish Wisdom*, proper for contriving Cruelties and Oppressions, or subtle Shifts and Deceits, that make Atheism a main Basis and Pillar of State Policy; such are those *that devise Mischief upon their Beds, &c.* *Mic. ii.* This is Serpentine Wisdom, not joined with, but most opposite to the Dove-like Simplicity. There is an *Earthly Wisdom* that draws not so deep in Impiety, as that other, yet is sufficient to keep a Man out of all Acquaintance with God and Divine Matters, and is drawing his Eye perpetually downwards, employing him in the Pursuit of such Things as cannot fill the Soul, except it be with Anguish and Vexation, *Ezek. xxviii. 4, 5.* That Dexterity of gathering Riches, where it is not attended with the Christian Art of right using them, abases Mens Souls and indisposes them wholly for this Wisdom that is from above. There is a *natural Wisdom* far more plausible than the other two, more harmless than that hellish

Wisdom; and more refined than that earthly Wisdom, yet no more able to make Man holy and happy than they; *Natural ψυχική*, it is the Word the Apostle St. Paul useth, 1 Cor. ii. ἀνθρώπου ψυχικῆς, naming the *natural Man* by his better Part, his Soul; intimating that the Soul even in the highest Faculty of it, the Understanding, and that in the highest Pitch of Excellency to which Nature can raise it, is blind in spiritual Objects; Things that are above it, cannot be known but by a *Wisdom from above*. Nature neither affords this Wisdom, nor can it of itself acquire it. This is to advertise us, that we mistake not *Morality and common Knowledge*, even of Divine Things, for *the Wisdom that is from above*. This may raise a Man high above the Vulgar, as the Tops of the highest Mountains leave the Vallies below them; yet is it still as far short of true supernatural Wisdom, as the highest Earth is of the highest Sphere. There is one main Point of the Method of this Wisdom that is of most hard Digestion to a natural Man, and the more natural wise he be, the worse he likes it, *If any Man would be wise, let him become a Fool that he may become wise*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. There is nothing gives Nature a greater Prejudice against Religion than this initial Point of Self-denial: When Men of eminent Learning or the strong Politicians hear, *that if they will come to Christ, they must renounce their own Wisdom to be fit for his*, many of them go away as sorrowful as the young Man, when he heard of selling all his Goods and giving them to the Poor.

Jesus Christ is that eternal and substantial Wisdom that came from above, to deliver Men from perishing in their affected Folly, as you find it at large, *Prov. viii.* St. Paul in the 1st Chap. of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians* calls him *the Wisdom of God*, ver. 24. that shews his Excellency in himself, and ver. 30. he tells us that *he is made of God our Wisdom*; that shews his Usefulness to us; and by him alone is this infused Wisdom from above conveyed to us, *In him are the*

*hid Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, Col. iii. 3. And from his fulness (if at all) we all receive Grace for Grace; and of all Graces, first some Measures of this Wisdom, without which no Man can know himself, much less can he know God. Now this supernatural Wisdom hath in it both Speculation and Prudence: It is contemplative and practical. These two must not be separated, I Wisdom dwell with Prudence, Prov. viii. 12. This Wisdom in its contemplative Part reads Christ much, and discovers in him a new World of hidden Excellencies unknown to this old World. There are Treasures of Wisdom in him, Col. ii. 3. but they are hid, and no Eye sees them, but that which is enlightened with this Wisdom: No, it is impossible, as one * says, τα θεῖα γινώσκει ὑπόκρυψος θεῶν. To know divine Things while God concealeth them. But when the renewed Understanding of a Christian is once initiated into this Study, it both grows daily more and more apprehensive, and Christ becomes more communicative of himself, and makes the Soul acquainted with the amiable Countenance of his Father in him: reconciled. No Man hath seen God at any Time, the only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, St. John i. 18. What wonder if the unlettered and despised Christian know more of the Mysteries of Heaven than the Naturalist, tho' both wise and learned? Christ admits the Believer into his Bosom, and He is in the Bosom of the Father. But withal know, that all this Knowledge, tho' speculatively high, yet descends to Practice; as it learns what God is, so it thence teacheth Man, what he should be: This Wisdom flows from Heaven, and a heavenly Conversation flows from it, as we find it there characterized by these practical Graces of Purity, Peace, Meekness, &c.*

This Wisdom represents to us the Purity of God's Nature, 1 John iii. 3. It gives the Soul an Eye to see the Comeliness and Beauty of Purity, as the Philo-

* So, boetes

sopher said of Virtue, to the End it might be loved, he would wish no more but that it could be seen. And as it thus morally perswades, so by an insensible Virtue it assimilates the Soul to Christ, by frequent Contemplation. It also produces all the Motives to Holiness and Obedience; it begets these precious Qualities in the Soul; it giveth a Christian a View of the matchless Virtues that are in Christ, and stirs him up to a diligent, though imperfect Imitation of them; it sets before us Christ's spotless *Purity*, in whose Mouth there was no Guile, and so invites us to *Purity*; it represents the perpetual Calmness of his Spirit, that no Tempest could reach to disturb it; *in his Mouth there was no contentious Noise, his Voice was not heard in the Streets*, and this recommends *Peaceableness* and *Gentleness*, and so in the rest here mentioned.

Hence I conceive may be fitly learned for our Use, seeing here is a due Wisdom and Knowledge necessary for Guidance, and directing in the Ways of *Purity* and *Peace*; it is evident, that gross Ignorance cannot consist with the Truth of Religion, much less can it be a Help and Advantage to it. I shall never deny that a false superstitious Religion stands in need of it; "not too much Scripture-wisdom for the People." The Pomp of that vain Religion, like Court Masks, shews best by Candlelight; fond Nature likes it well; the Day of spiritual Wisdom would discover its Imposture too clearly. But to let their foul Devotion pass, (for such it must needs be that is born of so black a Mother as Ignorance) let this Wisdom at least be justified of those that pretend to be her Children. 'Tis lamentable, that amongst us, where Knowledge is not withheld, Men should, thro' Sloth and Love of Darkness, deprive themselves of it. What abundance of almost brutish Ignorance is amongst the Commons? And thence Uncleanliness, and all Manner of Wickedness; a Darkness that both hides and increaseth Impurity. What's the Reason of so much Impiety

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piety and Iniquity in all Places, but the Want of the Knowledge of God? *Hosea iv. 1, 2.* And *2 Thes. i. 8.* *not knowing Jesus Christ, and not obeying his Gospel* are joined together. It will be found true, that where there is no Obedience, there is no right Knowledge of Christ: But out of all question, where there is not a Competency of Knowledge, there can be no Obedience; and as these two lodge together, so observe what attends them both, *Ibid.* *He shall come in flaming Fire to render Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And if there be any that think to shroud unpunished amongst the Thickets of Ignorance, especially amidst the Means of Knowledge, take notice of this, though it may hide the Deformity of Sin from your own Sight for a Time, it cannot palliate it from the piercing Eye, nor cover it from the revenging Hand of Divine Justice. As you would escape then that Wrath to come, come to Wisdom's school, and how simple soever ye be as to this World, if you would not perish with the World, learn to be wise unto Salvation.

And truly it is mainly important for this Effect, That the Ministers of the Gospel be active and dextrous in imparting this Wisdom to their People. If they would have their Conversation to be holy, and peaceable, and fruitful, &c. the most expedient Way is once to principle them well in the Fundamentals of Religion, for therein is their great Defect. How can they walk evenly and regularly so long as they are in the Dark? One main thing is to be often pointing at the Way to Christ, the Fountain of this Wisdom. *Without this you bid them be clothed, and clothe them not.*

How needful then is it that Pastors themselves be Seers indeed, as the Prophets were called of old; not only faithful but wise Dispensers, as our Saviour speaks, *St. Luke xii. 42.* *That they be διδασκῆται, able and apt to teach,*

teach. 1. *Tim.* iii. 2. Laudable is the Prudence, that tries much the Churches Store-houses, the Seminaries of Learning; but withal, it is not to be forgot, that as a due Furniture of Learning is very requisite for this Employment, so it is not sufficient. When one is duly enriched that Way, there is yet one thing wanting that grows not in Schools: Except this infused Wisdom from above season and sanctify all other Endowments, they remain *κοινὰ*, common and unholy, and therefore unfit for the Sanctuary. Amongst other weak Pretences to Christ's Favour in the last Day, This is one, *We have preached in thy Name*, yet says Christ, *I never knew you*; surely then they knew not him, and yet they preached him. Cold and lifeless (though never so fine and well contrived,) must those Discourses be, that are of an *unknown Christ*. Pastors are called Angels, and therefore, though they use the secondary Helps of Knowledge, they are mainly to bring their Message from above from the Fountain, the Head of this pure Wisdom.

Pure.] If it come from above it must needs be *pure originally*, yea it is *formally pure* too, being a main Trait of God's renewed Image in the Soul. By this Wisdom the Understanding is both refined, and strengthened to entertain right conceptions of God in his Nature and Works. And this is primarily necessary, that the Mind be not infected with false Opinions in Religion; if the Spring-head be polluted, the Streams cannot be *pure*; it is more important than Men usually think for a good Life. But that which I suppose is here chiefly intended is, that it is *effectively* and *practically pure*, it *purifies the Heart*, *Act.* 15. 9. (said of *Faith* which in some Sense and Acceptation differs not much from this Wisdom) and consequently the *Words*, and *Actions* that flow from the Heart.

This *Purity* some render *Chastity*. The Wisdom from above is *chaste*, *ἀγνή*. The Word is indeed of-

ten so taken and includes that here, but it is too narrow a Sense to restrict it to that only. It is here an universal Detestation of all Impurity, both of Flesh and Spirit, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Pride, Self-love, Profaneness of Spirit and Irreligion, tho' they do not so properly pollute the Body as carnal Uncleaness; yet they do no less defile the Soul, and make it abominable in the Sight of God. Those Apostate Angels called *unclean Spirits*, are incapable of bodily Defilement (tho' indeed they tempt and inveigle Men to it;) their own inherent Pollutions must needs be spiritual, for they are Spirits. *Idolatry* in Scripture goes often under the Name of *Fornication* and *Adultery*, and indeed these Sins may mutually borrow and lend their Names the one to the other; *Idolatry* may well be called *spiritual Unchastity*; and unchaste Love, *carnal Idolatry*. Earthly-mindedness likewise is an Impurity of the Soul; in the Apostle's Phrase, Covetousness is *Idolatry*, and so a spiritual Pollution; yea it may well share with *Idolatry* in its borrowed Name, and be called *Adultery* too; for it misbestows the Soul's prime Affection upon the Creature, which by Right is God's peculiar.

This Purity that true Wisdom works is contrary to all Pollution. We know then in some Measure what it is, it rests to enquire where it is, and there is the difficulty; it is far easier to design it in itself, than to find it among Men, *Who can say, I have made my Heart clean?* Prov. xx. 9. Look upon the greatest part of Mankind, and you may know at first Sight, that Purity is not to be lookt for among them, they suffer it not to come near them, much less to dwell with them and within them; they hate the very Semblance of it in others, and themselves delight in Intemperance and all Manner of Licentiousness, like foolish Children striving who shall go furthest into the Mire; these cannot say they have made clean their Hearts, for all their Words and Actions will bely them. If you come to the
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mere Moralist, the *World's* *best* Man, and ask him; it may be, he will tell you, he hath cleansed his Heart, but believe him not. It will appear he is not yet cleansed, because he says he has done it himself, for (you know) there must be some other, besides Man, at this Work. Again he rising no higher than Nature, hath none of this heavenly Wisdom in him, and therefore is without this Purity too. But if you chance to take Notice of some well skilled Hypocrite, every thing you meet with makes you almost confident, that *there* is Purity; yet if he be strictly put to't, he may make some good Account of the Pains he hath taken to refine his Tongue and his publick Actions, but he dare not say he hath made clean his Heart, it troubles his Peace to be askt the Question. He never intended to banish Sin, but to retire it to his innermost and best Room, that so it might dwell unseen within him, and where then should it lodge but in his Heart? Yet possibly because what's outward is so fair, and Man cannot look deeper to contradict him, he may embolden himself, to say he's inwardly suitable to his Appearance: but there is a Day at hand that shall to his endless Shame at once discover both his secret Impurity and his Impudence in denying it.

After these, there follows a few despised and melancholy Persons (at least as to outward Appearance) who are almost always hanging down their Heads, and complaining of abundant Sinfulness. And sure, Purity cannot be expected in these who are so far from it by their own Confession; yet the Truth is, that such Purity, as is here below, will either be found to lodge among these, or no where. Be not deceived, think not that they who loath, and (as they can) fly from the Unholiness of the World, are therefore taken with the Conceit of their own Holiness; but as their perfect Purity of Justification is by Christ's imputed Righteousness, so likewise they will know, and do always acknowledge, that

that their inherent Holiness is *from above* too, from the same Fountain Jesus Christ. The Wisdom *from above* is pure, this is their Engagement to Humility, for it excludes Vaunting and Boasting; and besides that, it is imperfect, troubled and stained with Sin, which is enough to keep them humble. Their daily sad Experience will not suffer them to be so mistaken; their many Faults of Infirmary, cannot but keep them from this presumptuous Fault. There is a Generation indeed that is *pure in their own Eyes*, (Prov. xxx. 12.) *but they are such as are not washen from their Filthiness.* They that are washen, are still bewailing, that they again contract so much Defilement. The most purified Christians are they that are most sensible of their Impurity. Therefore I called not this an universal Freedom from Pollution, but an universal Detestation of it: They that are thus pure are daily defiled with many Sins, but they cannot be in love with any Sin at all, nor do they willingly dispense with the smallest Sins, which a natural Man either sees not to be Sin (tho' his dim Moon-light discover grosser Evils) or if he do see them, yet he judges it too much Niceness to chuse a great Inconvenience rather than a little Sin. Again they differ in another particular, a natural Man may be so far in Love with Virtue after his Manner, as to dislike his own Faults and resolve to amend them, but yet he would think it a great Weakness to sit down and mourn for Sin, *and to afflict his Soul*, as the Scripture speaks. The Christian's Repentance goes not so lightly, there is a great deal more Work in it, 2 Cor. vii. 11. There is not only Indignation against Impurity, but it proceeds to Revenge. The Saints, we read of in Scripture, were ashamed of their Impurity, but never of their Tears for it. Let the World enjoy their own Thoughts and account it Folly; yet sure the Christian that delights in Purity, seeing he cannot be free from daily Sin, when he retires himself at Night, is then best contented

when his Eyes serve him most plentifully to weep out the stains of the by-past Day; yet he knows withal, that it is only his Redeemer's Blood that takes away the Guilt of them. This is the Condition of those that are truly, tho' not yet fully cleansed from the Pollutions of the World by the Spirit of Wisdom and Purity. What mean they then, that would argue themselves out of this Number, because they find yet much Dross left, and that they are not so defecated and refined as they would wish to be? On the contrary, this Hatred of Pollution testifies strongly, that the contrary of it, *Purity*, is there; and tho' its Beginnings be small, doubt not, it shall in the end be victorious; the smoaking of this Flax shews indeed that there is gross Matter there, but it witnesseth likewise that there is fire in it too; and tho' it be little, we have Christ's own Word for it, that it shall not be quenched; and if he favour it, no other *Power* shall be able to quench it. You find not indeed absolute Holiness in your Persons, nor in your best Performances, yet if you breathe and follow after it, if the Pulse of the Heart beat thus, if the main Current of your Affection be towards Purity, if Sin be in you as your Disease and greatest Grief, and not as your Delight, then take Courage, you are as pure as Travellers can be; and notwithstanding that impure Spirit, *Satan*, and the Impurity of your own Spirits vex you daily with Temptations, and often foil you, yet in despite of them all, you shall arrive safe at home where Perfection dwells.

Wisdom from above is pure] Be ashamed then of your extream Folly, you that take Pleasure in any kind of Uncleanness, especially seeing God hath reformed and purged his House amongst us: You that are, or should be his living Temples, remain not unreformed; if you do, Church-Reformation will be so far from profiting you, that, as a clearer Light, it will but serve to make your Impurity both more visible and more inexcusable. If you mean that the

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Holy Ghost should dwell with you, entertain him, avoiding both spiritual and fleshly Pollutions. The Word here used doth more particularly signify *Purity*; and certainly where-ever this Wisdom from above is, this comely Grace is one of her Attendants. Whatever any have been in times past, let all be persuaded henceforth to mortify all lustful and carnal Affections; know that there is more true and lasting Pleasure in the Contempt of unlawful Pleasures, than in the Enjoyment of them. Grieve not then the good Spirit of God with Actions or Speeches, yea or with Thoughts, that are impure. The unholy Soul, like the mystical *Babylon*. *Apoc. xiii.* makes itself a Cage of unclean Birds, and an Habitation of filthy Spirits; and if it continues to be such, it must, when it dislodges, take up its Habitation with cursed Spirits for ever in utter Darkness. But as for those that are sincerely and affectionately pure, that is, pure in Heart, our Saviour has pronounced their begun Happiness, *Blessed are they that are pure in Heart*; and assured them of full Happiness, *for they shall see God*. This Wisdom is sent from Heaven on purpose to guide the Elect thither by the Way of Purity. And mark how well their Reward is suited to their Labour, their frequent contemplating and beholding of God's Purity as they could, while they were on their Journey, and their labouring to be like him, shall bring them to sit down in Glory: and to be for ever the pure Beholders of that purest Object. *They shall see God*. What this is we cannot tell you, nor can you conceive it: But walk Heavenwards in Purity, and long to be there, where you shall know what it means; *for you shall see him as he is*.

Now to that blessed Trinity be Praise for ever.

S E R M O N II.

P R E F A C E.

I Will return to my Place (saith the Lord by his Prophet) till they acknowledge their Offence, and seek my Face. In their Affliction they will seek me early*. The Father of Mercy hides himself from his Children, not to lose them, but that they may seek him, and may learn, having found him, to keep closer by him than formerly. He threatens them to keep them from Punishment: If his Threatning work Submission, it is well; if not, he punishes them gently, to save them from Destruction. He seeks no more, but that they acknowledge their Offence, and seek his Face. Wonderful Clemency! For who can forbear to confess Multitudes of Offences that know themselves? And who can chuse but seek thy Face, that ever saw thy Face, and that know thee? In their Affliction they will seek me early. He that prays not till Affliction comes and forces him to it, is very slothful; but he that prays not in Affliction, is altogether senseless. Certainly they that at this Time are not more than ordinary fervent in Prayer, or do not at least desire and strive to be so, cannot well think that there is any spiritual Life within them. Sure it is high Time to stir up ourselves to Prayers and Tears. All may bear Arms in that kind of Service. Weak Women may be strong in Prayer; and those Tears, wherein they usually abound upon other Occasions, cannot be so well spent as this way. Let them not run out in Howlings and Impatience, but bring them, by bewailing Sins, private as well as publick, to quench this publick Fire. And ye Men, yea, ye Men of Courage, account it no Disparagement thus to weep

* Hof. v. 15.

weep. We read often of *David's Tears*, which was no Stain to his Valour. That Cloud that hangs over us, which the frequent Vapours of our Sins have made, except it dissolve and fall down again in these sweet Showers of godly Tears, is certainly reserved to be the Matter of a dreadful Storm. Be instant every one in secret for the averting of this Wrath, and let us now again unite the Cries of our Hearts for this Purpose to our compassionate God, in the Name and Mediation of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

JOB. XXXIV. 31, 32.

Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have born Chastisement, I will not offend any more.

That which I see not, teach thou me: If I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.

THE great Sin and the great Misery of Man is, the forgetting of God; and the great End and Use of his Works and of his Word is, to teach us the right Remembrance and Consideration of Him, in all Estates. These Words do particularly instruct us in the Application of our Thoughts towards him in the time of Affliction. The Shortness and the various Signification of the Words used in the Original, gives occasion to some other Readings, and another Sense of them. But this we have in our Translation, being not only very profitable, but very congruous, both to the Words of the primitive Text, and to the Contexture of the Discourse; I shall keep to it, without dividing your Thoughts by the mentioning of any other. Neither will I lead you so far about, as to speak of the great Dispute of this Book, and the Question about which it is held. He that speaks here, though the youngest of the Company, yet, as a wise and calm spirited Man, closes all with a Discourse of excellent Temper, and full of grave useful Instructions, amongst which this is one,

Surely it is meet to be said or spoke to God] This speaking to God, though it may be vocal, yet it is

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not necessarily nor chiefly so, but is always mainly, and may often be, only mental; without this, the Words of the Mouth, how well chosen, and well exprest soever they be, are to God of no Account or Signification at all. But if the Heart speak, even when there is not a Word in the Mouth, it is that he hearkens to, and regards that Speech, though made by a Voice that none hears but He, and is a Language that none understands but He.

But it is a rare unfrequented thing, this Communing of the Heart with God, speaking its Thoughts to him concerning itself, and concerning him, and his dealing with it, and the Purposes and Intentions it hath towards him; which is the Speech here recommended, and is that divine Exercise of Meditation, and Soliloquy of the Soul with itself, and with God, hearkening what the Lord God speaks to us, within us, and our Hearts ecchoing and resounding his Words, as *Pf. xxvii. 8, 9.* and opening to him our Thoughts of them, and of ourselves. Though they stand open, and he sees them all, even when we tell him not of them, yet because he loves us, he loves to hear them of our own speaking; *let me hear thy Voice, for it is sweet:* As a Father delights in the little stammering lisping Language of his beloved Child. And if the reflex Affection of Children be in us, we will love also to speak with our Father, and to tell him all our Mind (*παρρησία*) and to be often with him in the Entertainments of our secret Thoughts.

But the most of Men are little within; either they wear out their Hours in vain Discourse with others, or possibly vainer Discourses with themselves; even those that are not of the worst sort, and possibly that have their Times of secret prayer, yet do not so delight to think of God and to speak with him, as they do to be conversant in other Affairs, and Companies, and Discourses, in which there is a great deal of Froth and Emptiness. Men think, by talking of many things, to be refreshed, and yet when they have done,
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find that it is nothing; and that they had much better have been alone, or have said nothing. Our Thoughts and Speeches in most things run to waste, yea are defiled, as Water spilt on the Ground, is both lost, cannot be gathered up again, and it is polluted, mingled with Dust. But no Word spoke to God, from the serious Sense of a holy Heart, is lost; he receives it, and returns it into our Bosom with Advantage: A Soul that delights to speak to him, will find that he also delights to speak to it. And this Communication certainly is the sweetest and happiest Choice, to speak little with Men, and much with God. One short Word, such as this here, spoke to God, in a darted Thought, eases the Heart more when it is afflicted, than the largest Discourses and Complaining to the greatest and powerfulest of Men, or the kindest and most friendly. It gives not only Ease but Joy, to say to God, *I have sinned, yet I am thine*; or as here, *I have born Chastisement, I will no more offend*. The Time of Affliction is peculiarly a Time of speaking to God, and such Speech as this is peculiarly befitting such a Time. And this is one great Recommendation of Affliction, that it is a Time of wiser and more sober Thoughts; a Time of the returning of the Mind inwards and upwards. A High Place, Fulness and Pleasure draws the Mind more outwards; great Light and white Colours disgregate the Sight of the Eye, and the very Thoughts of the Mind too. And Men find that the Night is a fitter Season for deep Thoughts. *It is better*, says Solomon, *to go to the House of Mourning than to the House of Feasting* *: Those Blacks made the Mind more serious. 'Tis a rare Thing to find much Retirement unto God, much Humility and Brokenness of Spirit, true Purity and Spiritualness of Heart in the Affluences and great Prosperities of the World. 'Tis no easy thing to carry a very full Cup even, and to digest well the Fatness of a great Estate, and great Place. They are not to be envied that have them;

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even

* *Βελούτοις οὐκ ὡς Φέρειν.*

even though they be of the better sort of Men, it is a thousand to one but that they shall be Losers by the Gains and Advancements of this World; suffering proportionably great Abatements of their best Advantages, by their Prosperity. The Generality of Men, while they are at Ease, do securely neglect God, and little mind either to speak to him, or to hear him speak to them. God complains thus of his own People, *I spake to them in their Prosperity, and they would not hear.* The Noises of Coach-wheels, of their Pleasures, and of their great Affairs, so fill their Ears, that the *still Voice*, wherein God is, cannot be heard; *I will bring her into the Wilderness, and there I will speak to her Heart,* says God of his Church. There the Heart is more at Quiet to hear God, and to speak to him, and is disposed to speak in the Style here prescribed, humbly and repentingly.

I have born Chastisement] The speaking thus unto God under Affliction signifies, That our Affliction is from his Hand, and to the Acknowledgment of this Truth, the very natural Consciences of Men do incline them. Tho' Trouble be the general Lot of Mankind, yet it doth not come on him by an improvidential Fatality, *Tho' Man is born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upwards,* Job. v. *Yet it comes not out of the Dust.* It is no less true, and in itself no less clear, that all the good we enjoy, and all the evil we suffer comes from the same Hand; but we are naturally more sensible of evil than of good, and therefore do more readily reflect upon the Original and Cause of it. Our Distresses lead us unto the notice of the righteous God inflicting them, and our own unrighteous Ways procuring them, and provoking him so to do, and therefore it is meet to speak in this submissive humble Language to him. It is by all Means necessary to *speak* to him, he is the Party we have to deal withal, or to speak to, even in those Afflictions whereof Men are the intervenient visible Causes. They are indeed but instrumental Causes, the Rod and

S E R M O N II.

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Staff * in his Hand that smites us ; therefore our Business is with him, in whose supream Hand alone the Mitigations and Increases, the Continuance, and the Ending of our Troubles ly. *Who gave Jacob to the Spoil, and Israel to the Robbers? Did not the Lord against whom we have sinned?* So Lam. i. 14. *The Yoke of my Transgressions is bound on by his Hand.* Therefore it is altogether necessary in all Afflictions to speak to him. And as it is necessary to speak to him, it is meet to speak thus to him, *I have born Chastisement, I will no more offend.* These Words have in them the true Composure of real Repentance, *humble Submission*, and *holy Resolution.* *I have born Chastisement*, that is, “ I have justly born it, and do heartily submit to it: “ I bear it justly, and take it well: Lord I acquit “ thee, and accuse myself.” This Language becomes the innocentest Person in the World in their Suffering. *Job* knew it well, and did often acknowledge it in his preceeding Speeches. Tho’ sometimes, in the heat of Dispute, and Opposure to the uncharitable, and unjust Imputations of his Friends, he seems to overstrain the Assertion of his own Integrity, (which *Elibu* here corrects) you know he cries out, *I have sinned against thee, what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of Man?* Job. vii. And Chap. ix. *If I wash myself with Snow-water, and make my Hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the Ditch, and mine own Cloaths shall abhor me.*

Vain foolish Persons fret, and foam at the Miscarriage of a Cause they apprehend to be righteous, but this is a great Vanity and inconsiderate Temerity in not observing, the great and apparent Unrighteousness in the Persons managing it. But tho’ both the Cause and the Persons were just to the greatest Height imaginable amongst Men, yet still were it meet to speak thus unto God in the lowest Acknowledgments and Confessions, *that Righteousness belongs unto him, and unto us Shame and Confusion of Face*, so says the Church, Lam. iii. *The Lord is righteous, for I have*

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rebelled

Heb. xii. 6.

rebelled against his Commandments. Tho' Affliction is not always designedly intended as the Chastisement of some particular Sin, yet where Sin is (and that is the Case of all the Sons of *Adam*) Affliction coming in, may safely be considered in its natural Cognation and Alliance with Sin, and so press forth humble Confessions of Sin and Resolutions against it. And thus in *Lev. xxvi. 41.* *They shall accept of the Punishment of their Iniquity, shall take it humbly and penitently, and kiss the Rod.*

Oh! that there were such a Heart in us! that, instead of empty Words that scatter themselves in the Wind, our many vain Discourses we hold one with another concerning our past and present Sufferings, and further Fears, and disputing of many fruitless and endless Questions, we were more abundantly turning our Speech this Way, in unto God, and saying, "We desire to give thee Glory, and take
 " Shame to ourselves, and to bear our Chastisement,
 " and to offend no more, to return each from his
 " evil Way, and to gain this by the Furnace, the
 " purging away of our Dross, our many and great
 " Iniquities, our Oaths, and Cursings, and Lying,
 " our Deceit, and Oppressions, and Pride, and Co-
 " vetousness, our base Love of ourselves, and hating
 " one another; that we may be delivered from the
 " Tyranny of our own Lusts and Passions, and in
 " other things *Let the Lord do with us as seems good*
 " *in his Eyes,*" Speaking to God in *Ephraim's*
 Words, *Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.* Words not unlike these, would stir his Bowels, as there; as it is said, that one String perfectly tuned to another, being touched, the other stirs of itself. When a stubborn Child leaves struggling under the Rod, and turns to intreating, the Father then leaves striking; nothing overcomes him but that. When a Man says unto God, "Father I have provoked thee to this, but
 " pardon, and thro' thy Grace I will do so no more," then the Rod is thrown aside, and the Father of
 Mercies

Mercies, and his humbled Child, fall to mutual Tenderness and Embraces.

What I see not, teach thou me, &c.] The great Article of Conversion is the Disengagement of the Heart from the Love of Sin. In that Posture, as it actually forsakes whatsoever it perceives to be amiss, so it stands in an absolute Readiness to return to every duty that yet lies hidden, upon the first Discovery; that is here the genuine Voice of a repentant Sinner, *What I see not, teach thou me, &c.*

This is a very necessary Suit, even for the most discerning, and clearest sighted Penitent, both in reference to the Commandment and Rule for discovering the general Nature, and several Kinds of Sin; and withal for the Application of this general Light, to the Examen of a Man's own Heart, and Ways, that so he may have a more exact and particular Account of his own Sins.

The former is the Knowledge of the Laws of God, and Rule, by which a Man is to try and to judge himself. The most knowing are not above the Need of this Request, yea, I am perswaded, the most knowing know best how much they need it, and are most humbled in themselves in the Conscience of their Ignorance and Darknes in divine Things, and are most earnest, and pressing in this daily Supplication, for Increases of Light and Spiritual Knowledge from him who is the Fountain of it, *What I see not, teach thou me.* On the other Side, the least knowing, are often the most confident that they know all, and swelled with a conceited Sufficiency of their Model, and Determination of all things, both dogmatical and practical. And therefore are the most imperious and magisterial in their Conclusions, and the most impatient of Contradiction, or even of the most modest Dissent.

The wisest, and holiest Persons speak always, in the humblest and most depressing Stile, of their own Knowledge, and that not with an Affectation of

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Modesty;

Modesty; but in the real Sense of the Thing as it is, and the sincere Account they give of it, and that commonly when they are declaring themselves most solemnly, as in the Sight of God, or speaking in Supplication to him with whom they dare least of all dissemble. Whosoever he was that spake these Words, *Prov. xxx.* sure he was a Man of eminent Wisdom and Piety, and yet begins thus, *Surely I am more brutish than any Man, and have not the Understanding of a Man, I have neither learned Wisdom, nor have I the Knowledge of the Holy.* And tho' he was so diligent a Student, and so great a Proficient in the Law of God, yet how importunate a Petitioner is he, for the understanding of it, as if he knew nothing at all? Besides the like Expressions in other *Psalms*, in this one *Psalms**, that being of such Length hath nothing but the breathing forth of his Affection to the Word and Law of God; how often doth he in it reiterate that, *Teach me thy statutes*: So often, that a carnal Mind is tempted to grow weary of it, as a nauseating Tautology; but he made it still new, with the freshness and Vehemency of his Affection. *Make me to understand the Way of thy Precepts; give me Understanding, and I shall keep thy Law.* And open thou mine Eyes, that I may see the Wonders of thy Law; unseal mine Eyes, as if still veiled and dark. These are the earnest and nobly ambitious Desires that daily sollicit holy Hearts, and stir them to sollicit the Teacher of Hearts, to be admitted more into the Secrets and Recesses of Divine Knowledge, not to those Abysses that God intends should be secret still, and from which he hath barred out our Curiosity, as the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, these Secrets that belong to himself alone, and concern us not to enquire after, and certainly to be wading in these Deeps, is the Way to be drowned in them. *The Searcher of Majesty shall be oppressed with Glory*; yet there is in Man a perverse preposterous Desire to pore upon such things as are on purpose hidden that we should not enquire after

after them, and to seek after useless, empty Speculations of them, which is a Luxury and Intemperance of the Understanding, like unto that, and springing from that, which at first undid us in the Root. These are Times full of those empty, airy Questions, and Notions in which there is no Clearness nor Certainty to be attained, and if it were, yet would serve to little or no purpose, not making the Man that thinks he hath found them out, one jot the better, or holier Man than he was before: *What avails it*, says that devout Author, *to dispute and discourse high concerning the Trinity, and want Humility, and so displease that Trinity.* The Light and Knowledge suited according to the Intendment of this Copy, is of another Nature, such as purifies the Heart and rectifies the Life. *What I see not teach thou me*, that is, of such things as may serve this End. *That if I have done Iniquity I may do it no more..* This is sound and solid Knowledge, such a Light as inflames the Heart with the Love of God, and of the Beauties of Holiness; and still, as it grows, makes those to grow likewise. Such are still, we see, *David's* multiplied Supplications in that *Psalms*; not to know reserved and unuseful Things, but *hide not thy Commandments from me. Thy Hands have made me and fashioned me.* “Now, what is that thy Creature and Workmanship begs of thee? What is that which will compleat my Being, and make me do Honour to my Maker? This is it, *give me Understanding that I may learn thy Commandments.*” You that would be successful Supplicants in this Request, wean your Hearts from this Vanity of Desire, such Knowledge is as the Cypress-Trees, fair and tall, but fruitless and sapless. Apply all you know to the purging out of Sin, and intend all the further Knowledge you desire, to that same End. Seek to be acquainted with higher Rules of Mortification, and Self-denial, and Charity, than yet you have either practised, or possibly so much as thought on; that by these, your Affections and Actions may be advanced to greater Degrees of Purity

Purity and Conformity with the Holiness of God. And for this End, beg of him to teach you, what you see not in the Exactness of the Law and Rule; and withal, which is the other thing in this Word, that, what you see not in the Application of it and Search of yourself, he would likewise shew you; for in that, we are commonly as undiscerning and dim-sighted as in the other, even where Men have some Notion of the Rule and their Duty; yet they perceive not their own, even their gross Recessions and Declinings from it. Love is a blinding thing, and above all Love, Self-love; and every Man is naturally his own Flatterer, he deals not faithfully and sincerely with himself in the Search of his own Evils. Now this we are to intreat of God, to be led into ourselves, and to be applied to the Work of Self-searching, by his own Hand, not only to have a right Apprehension of the Law given us, but a true Sight of ourselves. Oh! how many hidden undiscerned, yea unsuspected Impurities and Follies are there in the Hearts of those that are the most diligent in this Enquiry, much more in the greater Part, even of such as cannot absolutely be denied the Name of good Men? Some honest Intentions and good Desires there are in them; but they are slothful, and unwilling to go to this painful Business of trying and judging themselves, and when they set to it, many secret Corners, and in those many latent Inordinacies do escape their Search. *Cleanse me from secret Faults*, says *David*, that is, not only those hidden from Men, but even from myself, as is clearly his Meaning, by the Words preceeding, *Who knows the Errors of his Life*. Therefore is it necessary that we desire Light of God, *The Spirit of a Man is the Candle of the Lord*, says *Solomon*, *searching the innermost Parts of the Belly*; but it is a Candle unlighted, when he does not illuminate it for that Search. Oh! what a deal of Vanity and Love of this World, Envy and secret Pride lurks in many of our Hearts, that we do not at all perceive, till God causeth us to see it, leading us in,

as he did the Prophet in the Vision, to see the Idolatry of the *Jews* in his very Temple, by which they had provoked him to forsake it, and go far from his Sanctuary; and having discovered one Parcel, leads him in further, and makes him enter through the Walls, and adds often, *Son of Man hast thou seen these, I will cause thee see yet more Abominations, and yet more Abominations.* Thus is it within many of us that should be his Temples, but we have a Multitude of Images of Jealousy, one lying hid behind another, till he thus discover them to us. Oh! what need have we to intreat him thus, *What I see not, teach thou me!*

Now in both these, both in the Knowledge of our Rule, and of ourselves, though there may be some useful Subserviency of the Ministry of Men, yet the great Teacher of the true Knowledge of his Law, and of himself, and of ourselves, is God. Men may speak to the Ear, but his Chair is in Heaven that teaches Hearts, *cathedram habet in cælo.* Matchless Teacher! that teacheth more in one Hour than Men can do in a whole Age! that can cure the invincible Unteachableness of the dullest Heart, *gives Understanding to the simple, and opens the Eyes of the blind.* So then would we be made wise, wise for Eternity, learned in real living Divinity, let us sit down at his Feet, and make this our continual Request, *What I see not, teach thou me.*

And if I have done, &c.] That is, “ Any Iniquity “ that I yet know not of, any hidden Sin, let me but “ once see it, and I hope thou shalt see it no more “ within me; not willingly lodged and entertained.” This speaks an entire total giving up all Sin, and proclaiming utter Defiance and Enmity against it; casting out what is already found out without Delay, and resolving that still in further Search, as it shall be more discovered, it shall be forthwith dislodged, without a Thought of sparing or partial Indulgence to any thing that is Sin, or like it, or may any way befriend it, or be an Occasion and Incentive of it. This is that absolute renouncing of Sin, and Surrender of
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of the whole Soul and our whole selves to God, which whosoever do not heartily consent to and resolve on, their Religion is in vain, and (which is here the Point) their Affliction is in vain: Whatsoever they have suffered, they have gained nothing by all their sufferings, if their Hearts remain still self-will'd, stubborn, untamed, and unpliant to God. And this makes their Miseries out of Measure miserable, and their Sins out of measure sinful; whereas were it thus qualify'd, and had it any Operations this way towards the subjecting of their Hearts unto God, Affliction were not to be called Misery, but would go under the Title of a Blessedness: *Blessed is the Man whom thou correctest and teachest him out of thy Law.* That suiting with this here desired, *I have born Chastisement: What I see not, teach thou me; and if I have done Iniquity, I will do it no more.* Oh! were it thus with us, my Brethren, how might we rejoice, and insert into our Praises all that is come upon us, if it had wrought or advanced any thing of this kind within us, this blessed Compliance with the Will of God, not entertaining any thing knowingly that displeases him; finding a Pleasure in the Denial and Destruction of our own most beloved Pleasures at his Appointment and for his Sake, whatsoever is in us, and dearest to us, that would offend us, that would draw us to offend him, *were it the right Hand, let it be cut off, or the right Eye, let it be plucked out:* Or, to make shorter Work, let the whole Man die at once crucified with Jesus, *that we may be henceforth dead to Sin, dead to the World, dead to ourselves, and alive only to God.*

S E R M O N

(29)
S E R M O N III.

P R E F A C E.

THERE is no Exercise so delightful to those that are truly godly, as the solemn Worship of God, if they find his powerful and sensible Presence in it; and indeed there is nothing on Earth more like to Heaven than that is. But when he withdraws himself, and with-holds the influence and Breathings of his Spirit in his Service, then good Souls find nothing more lifeless and uncomfortable: But there is this Difference, even at such a time betwixt them, and those that have no spiritual Life in them at all, that they find and are sensible of this Difference; whereas the other know not what it means. And for the most part, the greatest Number of those that meet together with a Profession to worship God, yet are such as do not understand this Difference. Custom and Formality draws many to the ordinary Places of publick Worship, and fills too much of the room; and sometimes Novelty and Curiosity, to Places not ordinary, has a large Share: But how few are there that come on purpose to meet with God in his Worship, and to find his Power in strengthening their weak Faith, and weakening their strong Corruptions; affording them Provision of spiritual Strength and Comfort against Times of Trial; and, in a Word, advancing them some Steps forward in their Journey towards Heaven, where Happiness and Perfection dwells? Certainly these sweet Effects are to be found in these Ordinances, if we would look after them. Let it grieve us then, that we have so often lost our Labour in the Worship of God, through our own Neglect, and intreat the Lord, that at this Time he would not send us away empty; for how weak soever the Means be, if he put his Strength, the

the Work shall be done, in some measure, to his Glory, and our Edification. Now that he may be pleased to do so, to leave a Blessing behind him, let us pray, &c.

ISAIAH XXVIII. 5, 6.

In that Day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a Crown of Glory, and for a Diadem of Beauty unto the Residue of his People:

And for a Spirit of Judgment to him that sitteth in Judgment, and for Strength to them that turn the Battle to the Gate.

ALL the Works of Divine Providence are full of Wisdom and Justice, even every one severally considered; yet we observe them best to be such, when we take notice of their Order, and mutual Aspect one to another, whether in the Succession of Times, or such Passages as are cotemporary and fall in together at one and the same Time. As, when the Lord brings notable Judgments upon the proud Workers of Iniquity, and at the same Time confers special Mercies on his own People: Who is there that may not perceive Justice and Mercy illustrating and beautifying one another? It is true, the full Reward and perfect Rest of the Godly is not here below; they would be sorry if it were: Nor is this the Place of plenary Punishment for the Ungodly. Men may look for a Judgment too, yet the Lord is pleased at some times to give some Resemblances and Pledges, as it were, of that great and last Judgment in remarkable Passages of Justice and Mercy, at one and the same Time; and such a Time it is that the Prophet foretells in this his Sermon, which concerns the two Sister Kingdoms of *Israel* and *Judah*. Having denounced a heavy Calamity to come upon *Israel*, under the Name of *Ephraim*, he comforts those of *Judah*, under the Name of *the Residue of his People*. They not being so grossly corrupted as the other were, he stays them with this Promise: *In that Day*, saith he,

he, when the other shall be overwhelmed, as with a Deluge, *the Lord of Hosts shall be for a Crown of Glory, and for a Diadem of Beauty unto the Residue of his People.*

The Promise is made up of three Benefits, yet the three are but one; or rather, one is all the three to them. *The Lord of Hosts*; it is He that shall be their Honour, Wisdom and Strength. *He shall be a Crown, &c.* But first, a Word of the Circumstance of Time, *In that Day.*

That Sovereign Lord, who at first set up the Lights of Heaven to distinguish Times and Seasons, by their constant Motion, and likewise, by his supreme Providence ruling the World, hath fixed the Periods of States and Kingdoms, and decreed their Revolutions, their Rising, Ascending, and their Height, with their Decline and Setting, hath by a special Providence determined those Changes and Vicissitudes that befall his Church. That which the Psalmist speaks in his own Particular, *Psal. xxxi. 15.* holds of each Believer, and of the Church, which they make up in all Ages and Places: *I said, thou art my God, my Times are in thy Hand*; a sure and steady Hand indeed, and therefore he builds his Confidence upon it, *ver. 13. They took Counsel against me, but I trusted in thee.* And upon this, he prays in Faith, That the Face of God may shine upon him, and the Wicked may be ashamed.

Thus then, as many are looking after a Day of Mercy to the Church of God, pray and believe upon this Ground. That the Time of it is neither in the frail Hands of those that favour and seek it, nor in the Hands of those that oppose it, how strong and subtle soever they be, but in that Almighty Hand, that doth in Heaven and Earth what pleaseth him. If he have said, *now, and here,* will I give a Day of Refreshment to my People that have long groaned for it, a Day of the Purity and Power of Religion; if, I say, this be his Purpose, they must have somewhat more than Omnipotence that can hinder it.

When his appointed Time comes, to make a Day of Deliverance dawn upon his Church, after their long Night, either of Affliction or of Defection, or both; they that contrive against that Day-spring, are as vain as if they would sit down to plot how to hinder the Sun from rising in the Morning. And they that let go their Hopes of it, because of great apparent Difficulties that interpose betwixt their Eye and the Accomplishment of that Work, they are as weak as if they should imagine, when Mists and thick Vapours appear about the Horizon in the Morning, that these could hinder the Rising of the Sun, which is so far out of their Reach, and *comes forth as a Bridegroom, and rejoices as a mighty Man to run his Race*, says David. Those Mists may indeed hinder his clear Appearance, and keep it from the Eye for a Time; but Reason tells us even then, that they cannot stop his Course. And Faith assures us no less in the other, That no Difficulties can hold back God's Day, and Work of Mercy, to his People. But you'll say, "All the Difficulty is to know, whether the appointed Time be near or not." 'Tis true, we have no particular Prophecies to assure us; but certainly when God *awakes* his Children and makes them *rise*, this is a probable Sign that it is near Day. I mean, when he stirs them up to more than usual Hopes, and Prayers, and Endeavours, it is very likely that he intends them some special Good; but yet, more, when he himself is *arisen*, (as it pleaseth him to speak) that is, when he is begun to appear, in a more than ordinary Manner, of working by singular and wonderful Footsteps of Providence. This is, no doubt, a Sign that he will go on to shew remarkable Mercy to Sion, and that *the Time to favour her, yea, the set Time is come*, Ps. cii. 13.

Howsoever then, let the wonderful Workings of the Lord move those of you, that have any Power and Opportunity, to be now (if ever) active, for the greatest good, both of the present Age and of Posterity. And you that can be no other way useful, yet

you shall be no small Helpers if you be much in Prayer; let both your Hopes and your Fears serve to sharpen your Prayers. Be not too much dejected with any Discouragement, neither be ye carnally lift up with outward Appearances; *for the Heart of him that is lifted up is not upright in him*, Hab. ii. 4. But live, as the just do, by your Faith: And if the deferring of your Hopes should *sicken your Hearts*, as Solomon speaks, yet stay and comfort them with the Cordial of the Promises. This you are sure of, you have God's own Word engaged for it, that in those later Days *Babylon* shall be brought to the Dust, and the true Church of Christ shall flourish and increase: *And this Vision is for an appointed Time* (as Hab. says of his) *at the End it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not tarry*, Hab. ii. 3.

In that Day] In the Day of *Ephraim's* or *Israel's* Calamity, denounced in the former Verses; which, as most do conceive, was when the *Assyrian* oppressed, them and in the end led them captive, in the Reign of *Hosea*, as you have the History of it, 2 Kings xvii. At which time *Hezekiah* was King of *Judah*, as you find in the following Chapter: And in *that notable Reformation* wrought by him, with those Blessings that followed upon it, is found the Accomplishment of this Promise to *Judah*, *In that Day*, &c. The Parallel of God's different dealing with these two Kingdoms, at the Time there specified, (*in that Day*) does afford divers Lessons, which might be here not impertinently taken notice of. Only this,

Tho' *Judah* also had its own Corruptions when *Hezekiah* came to the Crown, yet it pleased the Lord to spare them, and work a peaceable Reformation, making *Israel's* Punishment their Warning. Truly that Nation, with whom the Lord deals thus graciously, is vilely ingrate if they observe it not with much Humility and Thankfulness, and with profit too. If the Lord should answer your Desires and Hopes with a Reformation in a peaceable way, and

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should

should yet lengthen out your long continued peace, and should make this little past shaking of it cause it to take root the faster: If he should, I say, do this, where would ye find fit Praises for such a Wonder of Mercy; especially considering, that in the mean while he hath made other Reformed Churches Fields of Blood, and made, as it were, the Sound of their Stripes preach Repentance to us? But certainly, if the hearing the Voice of the Rod prevail not, we shall feel the Smart of it, as this People of *Judah* did afterwards, because they were not so wise as to become wiser and better by *Israel's* Folly and Calamity. We are expecting great Things at our Lord's Hands, and our Provocations and Sins against him are great; yet there is none of them all puts us in so much Danger of Disappointment, as Impenitence. Were there more Repentance and personal Reformation amongst us, we might take it as a hopeful Fore-runner of that publick Reformation which so many seem now to desire.

The Lord of Hosts] This stile of his, you know, is frequent in the Prophets, in their Predictions of Mercy and Judgment; intimating both his Greatness and Majesty, and his supreme Power, for accomplishing his Word. No created Power can resist him; yea, all must serve him. The most excellent Creatures can have no greater Honour: The greatest are not exempted, nor the meanest excluded from serving him. In *Acts* xii. 23. you find one of the noblest Creatures, and a Number of the vilest, made use of at the same time in the same Service. Because *Herod* did accept of the Sacrilege of the People, and gave not back to this Lord of Hosts his own Glory, *the Angel of the Lord smote him, and the Vermin devoured him.* And in *Egypt*, you know, the employing of the destroying Angel, and what Variety of Hosts this Lord of Hosts did employ to plague them. What Madness then is it to oppose and encounter this great General; even in doubtful Cases, to run on blindly, without examining, lest peradventure a man

should

should be found a Fighter against God? And on the other Side, it is great Weakness to admit any Fear under his Banner. If a Man could say, when he was told of the Multitude of the ships the Enemy had, * *Against how many do ye reckon me?* How much more justly may we reckon this Lord of Hosts, against Multitudes of Enemies, how great soever? *They are to him as the Drop of a Bucket, and the smallest Dust of the Balance.* 'Tis ignorance and mean Thoughts of this mighty Lord that makes his Enemies so confident; and it is the same Evil, in some Degree, or at the best, Forgetfulness of his Power, that causeth Diffidence in his Followers, Isa. li. 12, 13. Now the same Lord of Hosts, you know, is likewise called *the God of Peace*; He is indeed, *Et pax Et bello insignis, splendid both in Peace and War.* The Blessing of Peace and the Success of War are both from him; and to him alone is due the Praise of both.

Shall be a Crown, &c.] He shall dignify and adorn them by his special Presence; to wit, in the Purity of his Ordinances and religion amongst them; the Profession and Flourishing of that shall be their special Glory and Beauty. For as the other two Benefits concern their civil Good, Justice flourishing within, and Wealth, and Opulency from without, so doubtless, this first, *this Glory and Beauty*, is Religion, as the chiefest of the three, and the other two are its Attendants. In *Pf. xxvi. ver. 8.* the Sanctuary, the Place of their solemn Worship, is called *the Place where God's Honour dwelleth*, or the Tabernacle of his Honour, and *Pf. xcvi. 9.* *the glorious Sanctuary, or the Beauty of Holiness.* And the Ark of God, you know, was called *the Glory.* *The Glory is departed from Israel,* (said the Wife of Phineas) *for the Ark of God is taken.* Pure religion, and a pure Worship, is the Glory of God amongst his People, and consequently, *their Glory.* Now referring this Prophecy to *Hezekiah's Time*, the Accomplishment of it is evident, in that Work of Refor-

* πρὸς ποσὰς μὲ ἀντιτάξεις..

mation, whereof you have the full History, 2 *Chron.* xxix. 30, 31, &c.

If it be thus, that the Purity of Religion and Worship, is the Crown and Glory of a People; and therefore, on the other Side, that their deepest Stain of Dishonour and Vileness, is the vitiating of religion with human devices; then to contend for the Preservation or the Reformation of it, is noble and worthy of a Christian. 'Tis for the Crown of Jesus Christ, which is likewise a Crown of Glory, and Diadem of Beauty to them, he being their Head. It is indeed, the true Glory both of Kings and their Kingdoms. Labour then for Constancy in this Work; let no Man take your Crown from you; you know how busy the Emissaries of the Church of Rome have been to take it from us, or, at least, to pick the Diamonds out of it, and put in false counterfeit ones in their Places, I mean, they stole away the Power of Religion, and filled up the Room with Shadows and Fopperies of their own devising. 'Tis the Vanity of that Church, to think they adorn the Worship of God when they dress it up with Splendor in her Service, which tho' some magnify so much, yet may most truly be called a glittering Slavery and Captivity. Then is she truly free and wears her Crown, when the Ordinances of God are conformable to his own Appointment. It is Vanity in Man, I say, when they dress it up with a multitude of gaudy Ceremonies, and make *it* the smallest Part of *itself*, whereas, indeed, its true Glory consists not in Pomp but in Purity and Simplicity. *Apos. xii.* we find the Church under the Name of a Woman, richly attired indeed, but her Ornaments be all heavenly, *the Sun* her Cloathing, and her Crown of *twelve Stars*, needs she then borrow sublunary Glory? No, she treads upon it, the Moon is under her Feet. There is another Woman, indeed, in that same Book, arrayed in Purple and Scarlet, decked with Gold and precious Stones, and having a golden Cup in her Hand, but that golden cup is full of Abominations and Filthiness.

thiness, and she herself the Mother of Abominations, *Apoc. xvii. 4.* The natural Man judges according to his Reach, but to a spiritual Eye there is a most genuine Beauty in the Service of God and Government of his House, and when they are nearest to the Rule, the Word of God, then is it, that the Lord himself is the Crown and Diadem of his Church.

A Crown, &c.] Again we consider this personally, as belonging in particular to every Believer. They are all *made Kings and Priests unto God the Father*, *Rev. i. 6.* *They are a chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood*, *1. Pet. ii. 9.* how despicable soever to the World. This is their Dignity: *The Lord is their Crown and Diadem*; he subdues their Lust, and makes them Kings over their own Affections, and more than Conquerors over all Troubles and Persecutions; whereas carnal Men are continually hurried like Slaves, unto base Employments, still kept toiling in the ignoble Service of their own Lusts. They think, indeed, it is their Liberty, but that's a Baseness of Spirit, that complies so well with so vile and servile a Condition. And whereas they judge the godly to be the Refuse and Dross of the Earth, and the proper Objects of Contempt, this is because this their Crown, though most glorious, is invisible to the Eye of Nature. *The Lord is a Crown*: If they knew what this is, they would see enough in it to counter-vail their outward Meanness, and the Reproaches the World casts on them, as the Apostle *St. Peter* hath it, *1 Ep. cap. iv. 14.* *If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth on you*: He is their Crown.

And observe, how this Crown is opposed to that blasted Glory and fading Crown of Pride, spoken of in the former Verses.

Who is there that sees not, in daily Experience, the Vanity and Inconstancy of worldly Glory, and yet how few are there that wean themselves from it, and learn to disdain it? Still Men dote upon that

which is not, upon a Shadow, a Nothing. But would you have a Glory that fadeth not, a Garland that cannot wither, make the Lord your *Crown* and your *Glory*; and if he be so, glory in him and in nothing else: *Let not the wise Man glory, &c. but let, &c. Jer. ix. 23.*

You that are noble aspire to this Crown, as being so far above your perishing Honours and bounded Powers: And you that are outwardly meaner and lower, see how little Cause you have to complain of your Condition, seeing you are not debarred from this best and greatest Honour. And that you may discern it aright what it is, know that it consists in the Renovation of God's Image within you, which is in Holiness and Righteousness: So the Lord becomes your Crown in the Kingdom of Grace; and by this you may discover, whether or no you have attained it. If you can yet delight to wallow in the Puddle and Pleasures of Sin, you are far from this royal Condition; But if you find your Soul possessed with the Love of Holiness, and that you are trampling upon profane Delights, this may perswade you that God hath enabled you, and crowned you with his Grace, and will crown you with Glory. Again, try it by this; if the Lord is become your Crown and your Glory, you will glory in him, and in nothing else. Tho' you be wise, you will not glory in your Wisdom, nor in Strength, nor in Riches, nor Honours, tho' you had them all; but if you glory, you will glory in the Lord. And withal, your highest Joy will be to see the Advancement of his Glory; and, if you can, to be any way serviceable to the advancing of it.

And a Spirit of Judgment, &c.] Both to these that sit in Judgment, and to the People: for Justice is the strongest Base and Establishment of Authority. And withal, the Influence of it is most sweet and comfortable to these that are under Authority; and where it is wanting, that Order and Relation of Superiors and Inferiors, which God hath appointed in the Societies

cieties of Men, for their Good, tends exceedingly to the Damage of both. And therefore, where God intendeth to continue the Peace and Welfare of a People, he is liberal in pouring out much of this Spirit of Judgment on those that sit in Judgment. On the contrary, it is for a heavy Punishment, when he withdraws his Spirit from Rulers, and leaves them wholly to the Corruption and Vanity of their own Spirits.

That sit in Judgment] To all that are in Place of Authority and Judicature, from the supream to the lowest Magistrate; for this concerns them all, for they be all raised in their Subordination, and several Places above the People, for the Benefit and Good of the People, as the Stars, that be set so high, yet are placed there to be useful and beneficial to the inferior World.

Now this Spirit of Judgment comprehends in it, both due *Wisdom* and *Prudence*, for the Trial and right judging of affairs, and for the discerning betwixt sound and perverse Counsel; and withal a *Judgment practically good*, that cannot be biassed from the straight Line of Equity and Justice by any sinister Respect.

Now seeing the Spirit of Judgment is from the Lord, yea, he is this Spirit; it ought to perswade those that sit in Judgment, to intreat and pray for this, and to depend upon it, and beware of Self-confidence. *Trust in the Lord*, saith *Solomon*, and *lean not to thine own Understanding*; if you do, it will prove but a broken Reed. And as they that sit in Judgment should intreat his Spirit by Prayer, so generally, all must share with them in this Duty, and make Supplication for all that are in Authority over them, especially in extraordinary Times. Truly we have Matter of Thankfulness, that the Lord hath in some Measure inclined the royal Heart of our Sovereign to the Desires of his People, and ought still to pray, that the Lord would give the King his Judgments. And then, as the psalmist adds, *The*

Mountains shall bring Peace to the People, and the little Hills by Righteousness, Psal. lxxii. 3. And for this End, let all that wish the publick, yea, their own Good, pray much for Abundance of this Spirit of Judgment to be conferred on them; your Eyes and Expectations are upon them. If you would enjoy the Lamp, you must pour in Oil. This Spirit, indeed, you cannot pour upon them, but if you pour out many Prayers, you may draw it from above; he will give it, who here promises to be a *Spirit of Judgment.*

And strength] Observe, the Way to be powerful and successful against foreign Enemies is, to have Religion and Justice flourishing at home. And truly, if it please our God to answer the Desires of his People, at this Time, it may so unite the Affection and Strength of the two Kingdoms, (the Lord of Hosts being their Strength) as to make them a Terror to their Enemies, whereas they were become a Scorn and Derision to them. For your particular, labour to make the Lord your Glory, to have Christ made unto you, As the Apostle speaks, *both Wisdom and Righteousness, and Sanctification*, which are the Glory and Beauty of the Soul, and *Redemption* from your spiritual Enemies. Draw Strength from him, to fight and prevail against them, till after the short Combat of this Life, you obtain the Crown, and dwell in his Presence, where you shall fear no more Assaults, neither of Sin nor Affliction, but shall be for ever happy in the blessed Vision of his Face. *To him, be Glory, Amen.*

S E R M O N IV.

P R E F A C E.

EXternal Worship doth openly acknowledge a Deity, but want of inward Sense in Worship secretly denieth it; *The Fool hath said in his Heart, there is no God.* It is strange to hear so much Noise of Religion in the World, and to find so little Piety. To present the living God with a Carcase of lifeless Worship, is to pay him with Shells of Services, and so to mock him. And it is a more admirable long-suffering in him to defer the Punishment of such Devotion, than all the other Sins in the World. The *Egyptian* Temples were rich and stately *Fabricks*. A stranger, who had looked upon them without, would have imagined some great Deity within; but if they entered as (Lucian says, laughing at them) nothing was to be seen, but only some Ape, or Cat, or pyed Bull, or some other fine God like those. To behold our fair Semblance of Religion that frequent this House, it would appear that we were all the Temples of the Holy Ghost. But whoso could look within us, would find in many of our Hearts, Lust, Pride, Avarice, or some such like secret Vice adored as a God; and these are they that, while our Bodies sit here, do alienate our Souls from the Service of the eternal God. So that we are either altogether senseless and dead before him, or if any Fit of spiritual Motion rise within us, we find it here, and here we leave it, as if it were Sacrilege to take it home with us. But did once that Spirit of Grace breathe savingly upon our Souls, we should straight renounce and abhor those base Idols, and then all the Current of our affection would run more in this Channel; our Services would then be spiritual, and it would be our Heaven upon Earth to view

view God in his Sanctuary; and the obtaining of the Change is and should be one main End of this our Meeting, and, that it may be the happy Effect of it, our Recourse must be to the Throne of Grace by humble Prayer, *in the Name of our Mediator Jesus Christ the Righteous.*

ISAIAH LX. 1.

Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

ADmirable is the Worth and Depth of Divine Providence! this either we know not, or at least seldom remember; while we forget the Wonders of Providence, we direct our Thoughts to baser Objects, and think not on it; and while we forget the Depth of Providence (if at any Time we look towards it) we judge rashly and think amiss of it. If this be true of that general Providence whereby God rules the World, it is more true of his special Providence towards his Church. This is both the most excellent Piece of it, and therefore best worth the reading, and also the hardest Piece, and therefore it requires Sobriety in judging; above all other things he that suddenly judges in this makes haste to err. To have a right View of it, it must be taken altogether, and not by Parcels: Pieces of rarest Artifice, while they are a making, seem little worth, especially to an unskilful Eye, which being compleated, command Admiration. *P. Martyr* says well, *De operibus Dei, antequam actum, non est judicandum.* There is a Time when the Daughters of *Sion* embrace the Dunghil, and sit desolate in the Streets, as *Jeremiah* hath it in his *Lamentations*, iv. 5. and at that same Time the Voice of *Babylon* is, *I sit as a Queen, and shall see no Sorrow*, Isa. xlvii. All is out of Order here. But if we stay a while, we shall see *Sion* and *Babylon* appointed to change Seats, by the great Master of the World; *Come down* (says he) *Daughter of Babylon*

Babylon, and sit in the Dust, Isa. xlvii. And here to Sion; Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. It is an entire Catastrophe, both Parties find a notable Alteration together, that same Hand that exalts the one ruins the other. When the Sun rises upon the Church, her Antipodes must needs be covered with Darknes. As we find it in the next Verse to the Text. *Darkness shall cover the Earth, and gross Darknes the People; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his Glory shall be seen upon thee.*

The Prophet elevated by the Spirit of God to a View of after Ages, as clear as if present, seems here to find his People sitting under the dark Mantle of a sad and tedious Night, and having long expected the Sun's Return in vain, before its Time, they give over Expectation when it is near them, and desperately fold themselves to lye perpetually in the dark. Now the Prophet, as it were standing awake upon some Mountain, perceives the Day approaching, and the golden Chariots of the Morning of Deliverance hastning forward, and seems to come speedily with these glad News, to a captive People, and sounds this Trumpet in their Ears, *arise, shine, for thy Light is come, &c.* The very Manner of Expression is sudden and rousing, without a copulative, not *arise and shine*; but *arise, shine, &c.*

The Words have in them, a clear Stamp of Relation to a low Posture and obscure Condition; they suppose a People lying or sitting without Light. Deep Distress is that dark Soil that best sets off the Lustre of marvellous Deliverances; and among many other Reasons of the Church's Vicissitudes, why may not this be one: *The Lord is more illustrious in the World by that deep Wisdom and great Power that shines when he raises and restores her from desperate Afflictions, than if he had still preserved her in constant Ease.* He seems sometimes careless of her Condition, and regardless of her Groans; but even then, is he *waiting the most fit Time to be gracious*, as our Prophet speaks. And

And when it is time, out of the basest Estate he brings her forth more fresh, strong and beautiful than before. *Tho' you have lien among the Pots, ye shall be as the Wings of a Dove covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold, Psal. lxxviii. 13.* Do with the church what you will, she shall come through, and that with Advantage, *mergas profundo, pulchrior exit*, as one says of Rome. Keep the Church seventy Years captive, yet after that, *she shall arise and shine more glorious than ever.*

But surely the Strain of this evangelick Prophecy rises higher than any temporal Deliverance. Therefore we must rise to some more spiritual Sense of it, not excluding the former. And that which some call divers Senses of the same Scripture, is indeed, but divers Parts of one full Sense. This Prophecy is out of question, a most rich Description of the Kingdom of Christ under the Gospel. And in this Sense, this Invitation to *arise and shine* is mainly addressed to mystical *Jerusalem*, yet not without some Privilege to literal *Jerusalem* beyond other People. They are first invited to *arise and shine*, because this Sun arose first in their *Horizon*. Christ came of the *Jews*, and came first to them. *The Redeemer shall come to Zion*, says our Prophet, in the former Chapter, but miserable *Jerusalem* knew not the Day of her Visitation, nor the Things that concerned her Peace, and therefore are they now hid from her Eyes. She delighted to deceive herself with Fancies of (I know not what) imaginary Grandeur, and outward Glory, to which the promised Messiah should exalt her, and did, in that Kind, particularly abuse this very Prophecy; so dotting upon a Sense grossly literal, she forfeited the Enjoyment of those spiritual Blessings that are here described. But undoubtedly, that People of the *Jews* shall once more be commanded to *arise and shine*, and their Return shall be the Riches of the *Gentiles*; and that shall be a more glorious Time than ever the Church of God did yet behold. Nor is there any Inconvenience, if we think that the high Expressions
of

of this Prophecy have some spiritual Reference to that Time, since the great Doctor of the *Gentiles* applies some Words of the former Chapter to that Purpose, *Rom. xi. 29.* They forget a main Point of the Church's Glory, that pray not daily for the *Jews* Conversion.

But to pass that, and insist on the spiritual Sense of these Words, as directed to the whole Church of Christ. They contain a powerful Incitement to a twofold Act, enforced (as I conceive) by one Reason, under a twofold Expression, neither of them superfluous, but each giving Light to other, and suiting very aptly with the two Words of Command: *Arise, for the Glory of the Lord is risen, and shine, for thy Light is come.*

I will not now subdivide these Parts again, and cut them smaller, but will rather unite them again into this one Proposition: *The Coming and Presence of Christ engages all to whom he comes, to arise and shine.* In this Proposition, may be considered the Nature of the Duties, the Universality of the Subject, and the Force of the Reason. *First*, the Nature of the Duties, *what it is to arise and shine.*

Arising hath either Reference to a Fall, or to some contrary Posture of sitting, or lying; or to one of those two Conditions, that are so like one another, Sleep, or Death; and to all these, spiritually understood, may it here be referred. This is the Voice of the Gospel to the Sons of *Adam*, *arise*, for in him they all *fell*. The first Sin of that first Man, was the great Fall of Mankind: it could not but undo us, it was from so high a Station. Our daily Sins are our daily Falls, and they are the Fruits of that great one, *Thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity*, says the Lord to his People, *Hosea xiv. 1.* As for these Postures of sitting and lying, the Scripture makes use of them both, to signify the State of Sin. Says not St. *John*, *The World lies in Wickedness*, 1 John v. 19? Are not the People said to *sit in Darkness*, mentioned *Matth. iv. 16*? which is directly opposite to *arise* and *shine*. In the Darkness of *Egypt*, it is said, the People *sat still*,

still, none arose from their Places. In the gross Mist of corrupt Nature, Man cannot bestir himself to any spiritual Action, but when this Light is come, then he may, and should arise.

Now for Sleep and Death, Sin is most frequently represented in holy Writ under their black Vizors. To forbear Places where they are severally so used, we shall find them jointly in one, *Eph. v. 14. Arise thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead*; which Place seems to have special Allusion to this very Text.

The impenitent Sinner is as one buried in Sleep; his Soul is in Darknes, fit for Sleep, and loves to be so. That he may sleep the sounder, he shuts all the Passages of Light, as Enemies to his Rest; and so, by close Windows and Curtains, makes an artificial Night to himself within; not a Beam appears there, though without, the clear Day of the Gospel shines round about him. The Senses of his Soul, as we may call them, are all bound up, and are not exercised to *discern good and evil*, as the Apostle speaks, *Heb. v. 14*. And his leading Faculty, his Understanding, is furcharged with sleepy Vapours, that arise incessantly from the inferior Part of his Soul, his perverse affections. Nor hath his Mind any other Exercise, in this sleepy Condition, but the vain Business of dreaming. His most refined and wisest Thoughts are but mere Extravagancies from Man's due End, and his greatest Contentments nothing but golden Dreams: Yet he is serious in them, and no wonder, for who can discern the Folly of his own Dream till he is awake? He that dreams he eateth, when he awakes, finds his Soul empty, and not till then, *Isa. xxix. 8*. Now while he thus sleeps, his great Business lies bye, yet spends he his Hand-breadth of Time as fast, while he is fast asleep, as if he were in continual Employment; judge then if it be not needful to bid this Man *arise*.

Lastly, This Voice may import, that Man is spiritually dead. God is the Life of the Soul, as *it* is of the Body; while he dwells there, it is both comely

and active, but once destitute of his Presence, becomes a Carcase, where, besides Privation of Life and Motion, there is a positive Filthiness, a Putrefaction in the Soul, unspeakably worse than that of dead Bodies, *corruptio optimi pessima*. And as dead Bodies are removed from the Sight of Men, dead Souls are cast out from the favourable Sight of God, till Christ's saying *arise*, revive them. The Ministers of the Word are appointed to cry, *arise*, indifferently to all that hear them; and Christ hath reserved this Privilege and Liberty, to join his effective Voice, when and to whom he pleases. A carnal Man may shew his Teeth at this, but who is he that can, by any solid Reason, charge Absurdity upon this way of dispensing outward and inward Vocation? I will not here mention their idle Cavils, the Scripture is undeniably clear in this, that Man is naturally *dead in Sin*. The Gospel bids him *arise*, and it is Christ that is his Life, and that raises him. Thus we see, in some Measure, what it is for Men to *arise*. Now being risen they must *shine*, and that two Ways, *jointly and publickly*, as they make up visible Churches; and likewise *personally*, in their particular Conversation. First then, What is the shining of the true Church? Doth not a Church then shine, when Church Service is raised from a decent and primitive Simplicity, and decorated with pompous Ceremonies, with rich Furniture, and gaudy Vestments? Is not the Church then beautiful? Yes, indeed; but all the Question is, Whether this be the proper genuine beauty or no; whether this be not strange Fire, as the Fire that *Aarons* Sons used which became vain, and was taken as strange Fire? Methinks it cannot be better decided, than to refer it St. *John* in his Book of the *Revelations*. We find there the Descriptions of two several Women, the *one* riding in State, arrayed in Purple, decked with Gold and precious Stones and Pearl, *Rev. xvii. 3.* * the *other* in rich Attire too, but of another Kind, clothed with the Sun, and a Crown of twelve Stars on her Head. The other's Decorement was all earthly,

this

* Chap. 12.

this Woman's is all celestial: What need she borrow Light and Beauty from precious Stones, that is clothed with the Sun, and crowned with Stars? She wears no sublunary Ornaments, but, which is more noble, she treads upon them, the Moon is under her Feet. Now if you know (as you do all without doubt) which of these two is the Spouse of Christ, you can easily resolve the Question. The Truth is, those Things seem to deck Religion, but they undo it. Observe where they are most used, and we shall find little or no Substance of Devotion under them; as we see in that Apostate Church of *Rome*. This painting is dishonourable for Christ's Spouse, and besides it spoils her natural Complexion. The superstitious Use of Torches and Lights in the Church by Day, is a Kind of shining, but surely not commanded here. No, it is an Affront done both to the Sun in the Heaven, and to the Sun of Righteousness in the Church.

What is meant then when the Church is commanded to *shine* or *be enlightened*? These two Readings give the entire Sense of the Word; for first having no Light of herself, she must *receive Light*, and then *show it, be enlightened* and then *shine*. She is enlightened by Christ the Sun of Righteousness, shining in the Sphere of the Gospel. *This is that Light that comes to her, and the Glory of the Lord that arises upon her*. Hence she receives her Laws and Form of Government, and her shining is briefly the pure Exercise of those and Conformity to them.

And the personal shining of the several Members of a Church, is a comely Congruity with pure Worship and Discipline, and it is that which now is most needful to be urged. Every Christian Soul is personally engaged first to be enlightened, and then to shine, and we must draw our Light for ourselves from that same Source that furnishes the Church with her publick Light. There is a Word in the civil Law, *Uxor fulgit radiis mariti*, the Wife shines by the Rays of her Husband's Light. Now every faithful Soul is espoused to Christ, and therefore may well

shine, seeing the Sun himself is their Husband. He adorns them with a double Beauty of *Justification* and *Sanctification*: By *that*, they shine more especially to God, by *this* to Men. And may not these two be signified by a double Character given to the Spouse in the *Cant.* vi. 20. *She is fair as the Moon, and clear as the Sun*; the lesser Light is that of *Sanctification*, *fair as the Moon*; that of *Justification* the greater, by which, *she is as clear as the Sun*. The Sun is perfectly luminous, but the Moon is but half enlightened: So the Believer is perfectly justified, but sanctified only in Part, his one Half, his Flesh, is dark; and as the partial Illumination is the Reason of so many Changes in the Moon, to which Changes the Sun is not subject at all, so the Imperfection of a Christian's Holiness, is the Cause of so many Waxings and Wanings, and great Inequality in his Performances, whereas in the mean while his Justification remains constantly like itself: *This* is imputed, *that* inherent. The Light of *Sanctification* must begin in the Understanding, and from thence be transfused to the Affections, the inferior Parts of the Soul, and from thence break forth and shine into Action. This is then the Nature of the Duties, *arise and shine*.

The Universality of the Subject which was the second Head, is this, That every Man that knows Christ is here engaged to shine too. Neither Grandeur exempts from the Duty of shining, nor doth Meanness exclude from the Privilege of shining. Men of low Condition in this World need not despair of it, for it is a spiritual Act; great Men need not despise it, for it is a noble Act to shine by Christ's Light. In the 3d *Ver.* of this *Chap.* it is said to the Church, *Kings shall come to the Brightness of thy Rising*. To what end, but to partake of her Light and shine with her? And indeed the regal Attire of Christ's Righteousness, and the white Robes of Holiness, will exceeding well become Kings and Princes. *Give the King thy Judgments, O Lord, and thy Righteousness to the King's Son*.

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The third and last thing propounded was, the Force of the Reason, That *Christ's Presence* engages to *arise and shine*, wherein it is supposed that Christ declared in the Gospel, is the Light which is said here to come, and the Glory of the Lord which is said to be risen; so that now it should be more amply cleared, how Christ is Light, and the Glory of the Lord, and what his Coming and Rising is, but of these afterwards. I shall close now with a Word of Exhortation.

[*Arise then, for the Glory of the Lord is risen.*] The Day of the Gospel is too precious that any of it should be spent in Sleep or Idleness, or worthless Business. Worthless Business detains many of us; *arise* immortal Souls from moyling in the Dust, and working in the Clay like *Egyptian Captives*. Address yourselves to more noble Work; there is a Redeemer come that will pay your Ransom, and rescue you from such vile Service, for more excellent Employment. It is strange how the Souls of Christians can so much forget their first Original from Heaven, and their new Hopes of returning thither, and the rich Price of their Redemption, and forgetting all these, dwell so low, and dote so much upon Trifles; how is it that they hear not their well beloved's Voice, crying, *Arise my Love, my fair one, and come away?* Though the Eyes of true Believers are so enlightened, that they shall not sleep unto Death, yet their Spirits are often seized with a Kind of Drowsiness and Slumber, and sometimes even then, when they should be of most Activity. The Time of Christ's Check to his three Disciples made it very sharp, tho' the Words are mild, *What? could you not watch with me one Hour?* Shake off, believing Souls, that heavy Humour. *Arise*, and satiate the Eye of Faith with the Contemplation of Christ's Beauty, and follow after him till you attain the Place of full Enjoyment. And you others that never yet saw him, *arise*, and admire his matchless Excellency. The Things you esteem great, are but so thro' Ignorance of his Greatness; his Brightness,

you

you saw it, would obscure to you the greatest Splendor of the World, as all those Stars that go never down upon us, yet they are swallowed up in the surpassing Light of the Sun when it arises. *Stand up from the dead, and he shall give you Light. Arise and work while it is Day, for the Night shall come wherein none can work,* says our Saviour himself. Happy are they that arise early in the Morning of their Youth; for the Day of Life is very short, and the Art of Christianity long and difficult. Is it not a grievous thing, that Men never consider why they came into the World, till they be upon the Point of going out again, nor think how to live, till they be summoned to die? But most of all unhappy he, that never wakens out of that pleasing Dream of false Happiness, till he fall into eternal Misery: *Arise* then betimes, and prevent this sad Awakening.

And being risen, put on your beautiful Garments, *sa. lii. 1.* Draw towards you with the Hand of Faith the rich Mantle of Christ's Righteousness. 'Tis time to awake, says the Apostle, *Rom. xiii. 11.* and presently after, *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* And it is a Wonder how a Sinner can rest, while he is out of this Garment; for there is no other in Heaven or Earth can make him shine to God, and so shelter him from the Stroke of Justice. Put him on then, and so shine; being thus clothed, thou shalt shine in justification, and likewise in Sanctity. What a Privilege is it to be like God? a sanctified Conscience, what can be said against it? And first have an enlightened Understanding, for that is the proper Seat of Light; that ignorant Zeal that *Rome* commends, exposes Religion to Scorn and Contempt: Heat without Light is the Character of the Fire of Hell. We know all are not tied to a like Degree of Knowledge, but certainly all are obliged to have a Competency, and Diligence for Increase. Aspire then to be intelligent Christians, and to know well what you believe; let your Minds be filled with Knowledge, as the Apostle speaks. But let it not stop there, it

must have Influence into the Will, *Lux est vehiculum caloris*, true Light conveys Heat. All the Knowledge that the natural Man hath of Christ, not warming his Affection to Christ, is but *ignis fatuus*, a vain Light, it shall never lead him to Happiness. Saving Light produces Love, and by that act Faith works by Love, says the Apostle. That breaketh forth and shines in the Life, in Godliness, Righteousness and Sobriety. Shine then in all these, first in Piety towards God, for this is the Reflexion of these Rays of Light back toward their Source, and this will command the other two. No Man that shines in Godliness will wallow in Injustice and Intemperance. Guile and Wrong cannot endure the Light; they that are unjust cannot shine. And let them never offer to shine among Christians that are not sober, but stained with Riot and Uncleanness; these foul Enormities lay waste the Conscience, and put out the Light. How can any Seeds of Grace subsist undrowned, that are exposed to a daily Deluge of Cups? How can that pure Spirit, that chose the Likeness of a chaste Dove, dwell and give Light in that Soul that is a Nest of impure and filthy Lusts? No, there can be no Fellowship betwixt this celestial Light, whereby we should shine, and those infernal Works of Darkness. Let profane Men hold it a chief Strain of Wit to scoff at Purity, but you that pretend heaven-ward in good earnest, and mean to shine in Glory, shine here in Holiness; *For without Holiness no Man shall see God*. And do it with those Qualifications, (1.) *Constantly in every Estate*: Let not this Divine Light go out, neither by Day in Prosperity, nor by Night in Adversity. In every Place do not shine clear, and be dark in your Chamber; they that do thus *have their Reward*. That's a sad Word, if rightly understood, Beware of Hypocrisy. Again, shine *progressively*, gaining still more and more Victory over Darkness, till you attain unmix'd and perfect Light. The Way of the Just, says Solomon *is like the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the*

the perfect Day, Prov. iv. 18. Lastly, Shine humbly to his Glory, whose Light you borrow; not to shew forth your own Excellencies, but his, who hath called you from Darknes to his marvellous Light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. If we be Children of Light, our Brightness must praise the Father of Lights: Let your Light so shine before Men, that they seeing your good Works, (not yourselves if you can be hid, as the Sun affords its Light, and will scarce suffer us to look upon itself) may glorify (not you, but) your heavenly Father, Matth. v. 6. To conclude,

The pure Light of the Church is revived, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon you, and upon this Glory there shall be a Defence. If God be your Glory in the midst of you, he will be likewise a Wall of Fire round about you. All the Danger is, if we fall short in the Duty of shining; but as you desire that this Glory should abide and dwell amongst you, let all Estates of Men provoke one another to shine bright in Holiness. You who either by Birth or Office are in eminent Station, know that you were set there to be eminent and exemplary in shining, as Stars of more notable Magnitude. You who are Ministers of this Light, know that you are the Light of the World; and if the very Light become Darknes, how great will that Darknes be? You that are of a lower Order, know that you must shine too: for it is a common Duty. There is a certain Company of small Stars in the Firmament, which though they cannot be each one severally seen, yet being many, their united Light makes a conspicuous Brightness in the Heaven, which is called the *milky Way*: So tho' the shining of every private Christian is not so much severally remarkable, yet the Concourse and Meeting of their Light together, will make a bright Path of Holiness shine in the Church.

Now to the end we may each one shine in our Measure, we must learn to turn ourselves often towards him from whom our Light is derived. Con-
versing with him will make us more and more like

him. There is a secret unknown Virtue for this Purpose in secret Prayer and Meditation; were we more in the Mount with God, our Faces would shine more with Men. Let us then rescue from the World all the Time we can, to resort frequently thither, till such Time as the Soul, which is now often pulled down again by the Flesh, shall let that Mantle fall and come down no more, *but shine there without Spot, and be for ever satisfied with her Maker's Image.*

S E R M O N V.

P R E F A C E.

ART imitates Nature, and the nearer it comes to Nature in its Effects, it is the more excellent. Grace is the new Nature of a Christian, and Hypocrisy that Art that counterfeits it; and the more exquisite it is in Imitation, it is the more plausible to Men, but the more abominable to God. It may frame a spiritual Man in Image so to the Life, that not only others, but even the Hypocrite himself, may admire it, and favouring his own Artifice, may be deceived so far, as to say, and to think, it lives, and fall in love with it; but he is no less abhorred by the Searcher of Hearts, than pleasing to himself. Surely this Mischief of Hypocrisy can never be enough inveighed against. When Religion is in Request, it is the chief Malady of the Church, and Numbers die of it; tho', because it is a subtle and inward Evil, it be little perceived. It is to be feared there are many sick of it that look well and comely in God's outward Worship, and they may pass well in good Weather, in Times of Peace, but Days of Adversity are Days of Trial. The prosperous Estate of the Church makes Hypocrites, and her Distress discovers them;

them; but if they escape such Trial, there is one inevitable Day coming, wherein all secret Things shall be made manifest. Men shall be turned inside out; and amongst all Sinners that shall then be brought before that Judgment-Seat, the deformedest Sight shall be an unmasked Hypocrite, and the heaviest Sentence shall be his Portion.

Oh! that the Consideration of this would scare us out of that false Disguise in Time, and set us all upon the Study of Sincerity. Precious is that Grace in God's Esteem; a little of it will weigh down Mountains of formal Religion, in the Balance of the Sanctuary. Which of us have not now brought Hypocrisy, more or less, into this House of God? Oh! that it were not with Intention to nourish it, but with Desire to be here cured of it; for he alone that hates it so much, can cure it; he alone can confer upon us that Sincerity wherein he mainly delights. If we have a mind, indeed, to be endued with it, it is no where else to be had, we must intreat it of God by humble Prayer, in the Name of his well-beloved Son, by the Assistance of his Holy Spirit.

S E C O N D S E R M O N.

ISAIAH LX. I.

Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

TRuly Light is sweet, and it is a pleasing thing to behold the Sun, says the Preacher, Eccles. xi. 7. but the Interchange of Night with Day adds to its Beauty, and the longest Night makes Day the welcomest; as that People well knows, whose Situation in the World gives them a five or six Months Night all of one Piece. It is reported of some of them, that when they conceive their Night draws towards an End, they put on their richest Apparel, and climb up to the highest Mountains, with Emulation, who shall first discover

the returning Light; which, so soon as it appears, they salute with Acclamations of Joy, and welcome it with solemn Feasting, and all other Testimonies of exceeding Gladness. But such is the Lethargy of sinful Man, that he stirs not to meet his spiritual Light; and, which is worse, when it comes upon him, it finds him in Love with Darkness. Instead of his Shouts of Joy for this Light, many a Cry must be sounded in his Ears to awaken him; and it is well too, if at length he hear and obey this Voice, *Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, &c.* It is clear that the Words contain a *Command*, and the *Reason* of it: The *Command* to a twofold Act; the *Reason* under two Expressions, proportionately different. Good Reason the Church should *arise*, when the *Lord's Glory is risen upon her*; and it is very congruous, she should be *enlightened* and *shine* when *her Light is come*. Of those two Acts or Duties, somewhat was formerly spoken; and the Reason likewise was made use of so far as relative to those Duties, and tending to their Inforcement. But the Meaning of the Phrases, in which the Reason is exprest, was rather, at that Time, supposed, than either duly proved or illustrated; so that it will be now expedient to consider, simply in themselves, these latter Words, *Thy Light is come, &c.*

So far as this Prophecy hath Respect to the Reduction of the *Jews* from the *Babylonish* Captivity, that *temporal Deliverance*, and ensuing Peace and Prosperity was *their Light*, and that *Divine Power* by which it was effected, was this *Glory of the Lord*. And indeed, both these Expressions are frequently used in such a Sense in Holy Writ: *When I waited for Light, there came Darkness*, says *Job*, in his xxx. Chap. 26. Ver. (so *Isaiah* lviii. 8. and many other Places,) and the *Glory of the Lord*, for a singular Effect of his Power, *Job* xi. 40. *Isa.* lx. 18, and elsewhere. But this literal Sense is but a Step to elevate the Prophet to a Sight of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, which is usual with him; as our Saviour himself testifies of another of his Prophecies, *These*

Things,

Things, said *Isaias*, when he saw his Glory, and spoke of him, *Job. xii. 41.* It was a Sight of that same Glory, that makes him say, *thy Light was true, &c.*

In these Words, there are three Things, concerning Christ, represented to the Church's View, *First*, His Beauty and Excellency, in that he is called *Light*, and *the Glory of the Lord*. *Secondly*, The Church's Propriety and Interest in him, *thy Light*, and *risen upon thee*, which hath a restrictive Emphasis, as the very next Verse doth clearly manifest. As he is originally the Glory of the Lord, and the Light of the Lord, *lumen de lumine*, so he is communicatively the Church's Light and her Glory too, as it is exprest in the 19th Ver. of the same Chap. *thy God, thy Glory*. Thus hath she both his Worth, and her own Right in him, to consider. *Thirdly*, His Presence or her actual Possession, *he is come, and is risen*. And in these the Church, and each faithful Soul, may find a double Spring of Affection, the one of Love, the other of Joy. The transcendent Beauty of Christ makes him the choicest Object of Love, and her Property in him or Title to him, together with Possession, is the proper Cause of solid Joy.

First then, this Excellency is exprest by these two Characters, *Light* and *the Glory of the Lord*. Concerning which, it will be fit both to demonstrate that they are the proper Titles of Christ, and here to be taken for him; as also, to shew what they signify in him.

Indeed, the Apostle in his second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, 3d Chap. insists much in extolling both *the Light* and *the Glory* of the Gospel, and in the 4th Ver. of the next Chap. speaks of *the Light of the glorious Gospel*, but he immediately intimates whence it hath this Light and Glory; *the glorious Gospel of Christ*, says he, *who is the Image of God*. So that it is most unnecessary to enquire whether the Messiah, or the Word that reveals him, be rather here couched under these Terms of *Light* and *the Glory of the Lord*. These two agree so well altogether, and these Words agree

agree so well to them both, that it were an Injury to attempt to sever them. All the Difference will be this, Christ is that incomplex and substantial Light, the Gospel that complex Light wherein he appears. But (not to be guilty of *dark* Terms, especially in a Discourse of *Light*) I take it in this Resemblance; Christ is the Sun, and the Gospel his proper Sphere or Heaven, wherein he gives Light to his Church. He is *primarily* the Glory of the Lord, and the Gospel by *Participation*, because it declares him: So that much of that which shall be spoken here of Christ, will be secondarily to be understood of the Gospel of Christ.

That Christ is *Light*, the Scripture speaks abundantly. His own Voice, concerning himself, (notwithstanding the Cavil of the *Pharisees*) is above all Exception, for he is Truth itself, *I am the Light of the World*, saith he, *he that follows me shall not walk in Darknes*, Joh. viii. 12. The Father that sent him gives him the same Title, *I will give thee for a Light of the Gentiles*, Isa. xlii. 6. and xlix. 6. And not to multiply Citations of the Prophets and Evangelists, who with one Consent all magnify this Light, take the true Testimony of a false Prophet, (and indeed the favourable Witness of an Adversary is strongest.) It is that of *Balaam*, who saw that Christ was *Light*, tho' because he saw him afar off (as he says himself) and had not his Eye fortified, like the true Prophets, he discerned him but as a Star. *There shall come a Star out of Jacob*, &c. Numb. xxiv. 17. But what need we go so far, to be certified what this Light and Glory of the Lord is, the Lord of Glory himself, seeing the very next Verse to the Text assures us of it? *Upon thee shall the Lord arise*. And in the 19th Ver. *The Lord shall be thy everlasting Light, and thy God thy Glory*.

By this Time, I hope, it is clear, That the eternal Son of God, co-essential with his Father, was he that gave Accomplishment to this Prophecy, by appearing to the World wrapped up in the Darknes

of human Nature. He is *that Day-spring from on high that bath visited us*, as old *Zacharias* speaks, *Luke i. 78.*

Among all created Excellencies, none can be borrowed more fitly representing Christ than that of Light. And is it not Christ that decks his Church with supernatural Beauty, and makes it indeed *Kóσμος*, a comely World, called out of the World? But the manifold Agreement of Light with Christ, doth require more particular Consideration.

Light is (as they call it) *primum visibile*, the first Object of Sight. And Jesus Christ, whom the Apostle stiles *God over all blessed for ever*, is *primum intelligibile*, the prime Object of the Understanding. What is then become of that divine Sparkle, that understanding Soul, that the Father of Spirits breathes into these Bodies, that all our Thoughts creep here below, and leave their chief and noblest Object unconsidered? Which of us may not complain, (tho' few of us do) that our Souls have either no Wings to elevate themselves to the Contemplation of him, from whom they issued; or if they make Offers at it, our Affections, engaged to the World, make us, like a Bird tied by the Foot, fall presently down again into the Mire? It is high Time to leave hunting Shadows, and to turn our internal Eye to the beholding of this uncreated Light.

In this elementary World, Light being (as we hear) the first visible, all Things are seen by it, and it by itself. Thus is Christ, among spiritual Things, in the Elect World of his Church; *all Things are made manifest by the Light*, says the Apostle, *Eph. v. 13.* speaking of Christ, as the following Verse doth evidently testify. It is in his Word that he shines, and makes it a directing and convincing Light, to discover all things that concern his Church and Himself, to be known by its own Brightness. How impertinent then is that Question so much tossed by the *Romish* Church, How know you the Scriptures (say they) to be the Word of God, without the Testimony of

of the Church? I would ask one of them again, How they can know that it is Day-light, except some light a Candle to let them see it? They are little versed in Holy Scripture, that know not that it is frequently called *Light*; and they are senseless that know not that Light is seen and known by itself. *If our Gospel be hid*, says the Apostle, *it is hid to them that perish*; the God of this World having blinded their Minds against the *Light of the glorious Gospel*, &c. no wonder if such stand in need of a Testimony. A blind Man knows not that it is Light at Noon-day, but by Report: But to those that have Eyes, Light is seen by itself.

Again, it makes all other things that are in themselves to become actually visible (as they speak;) so by the Word of this substantial *Word* Jesus Christ, all things in Religion are tried and discovered. The very Authority of the Church which they obtrude so confidently, must be stopt and examined by these Scriptures, which they would make stand to its Courtesy. Doctrines and Worship must be tried by this Light: and what will not endure this Trial, must not be endured in the House of God. *To the Law and to the Testimonies* (says the Prophet) *if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them*, Isa. viii. 20. The Rays of Christ's Light are displayed thro' both his Testaments, and in them we see him.

But Oh! How sublime is the Knowledge of him? none is ignorant that there is Light, yet what Light is, few know; the best Wits are troubled to define it: So all that bear the Name of Christians acknowledge that Christ is, but to know what he is, is of marvellous Difficulty. In a speculative Way, un-foundable is the Depth of his Nature and Properties, *and his Generation who can declare?* says our Prophet; I define not, whether his eternal Generation, or his Incarnation in Time. These are Mysteries that shall hold the very Angels busy in Admiration for ever; and for experimental Knowledge by Faith, how small

is the Number of those that are truly acquainted with it?

Again, Light fitly resembles Christ in Purity, it visits many impure Places and lights upon the basest Parts of the Earth, and yet remains most pure and undefiled. Christ sees and takes notice of all the enormities, and sinful Pollutions in the World, (as David says of the Sun, *Psal. xix.*) *there is nothing hid from his Beams*; yea many of those foul Evils he cures, and purgeth away these Pollutions, and yet is never stained by them in the least Degree. He is a Physician not capable of Infection, and therefore while he dwelt among Men, he shunned not Publicans and Sinners, but sought them rather; for with such was his Business and Employment. Indeed for a frail Man to be too bold in frequenting prophane and obstinate Persons, tho' with Intention to reclaim them, is not always so safe. *Metus est ne attrahant*; they may pull him in, that would help them forth, and pollute him that would cleanse them. But our Saviour, the Light of the World, runs no such Hazard, he is stronger than the perversest Sinner, yea than the Prince of Darknes himself, over whom his Banners are always victorious, and purer than to be in Danger of Pollution. His precious Blood is a Fountain opened for Sin and Uncleanness, Sinners are purified by it, and it is not defiled by them. Thousands have washed in it, yet it shall abide, and always shall be most perfectly pure: *And such a High Priest was needful for us, ἀμάρτο; undefiled*, and tho' conversant with Sinners, to communicate to them his Goodness, yet *separate from Sinners* in Immunity from their Evil, *Heb. vii. 26.*

To this agrees well that Title, the Prophet *Malachi* gives him, *Chap. iv. 2.* when he calls him the *Sun of Righteousness*, full of Purity, and Righteousness, (as the Sun is of Light) all luminous, without Spot, subject to no Eclipse in himself, his Light being his own, tho' our Sins interposed may hide him sometimes from us, as those real Eclipses in the Sun,

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are rather ours, for we are deprived of Light, but not the Sun. Christ is many ways most fitly called the Sun; for since all created Light falls infinitely short of his Worth, the Prince and Chief of them, the Sun, cannot but suit best, so far as may be, to set forth his Excellency.

The Light of the Sun is neither parted nor diminished, by being imparted to many several People and Nations that behold it at one Time; nor is the Righteousness of this Sun of Righteousness either lessened to himself, or to several Believers, by many partaking of it at once; it is wholly conferred upon each one of them, and remains whole in himself. Hence it is, that not only Christ invites so liberally Sinners to come to him, but even justified Persons would so gladly draw all others to lay hold on this Righteousness of their Redeemer; knowing well, that if all the World were enriched by it, they themselves would be no whit the poorer.

Again, the Sun hath a vivifying Power, not only of Plants and Vegetables, but, if Philosophers be right, *Sol & homo generant hominem*; it hath a special Influence in the Generation of Man, but is both more certainly and more eminently true of this Sun we speak of, in Man's Regeneration; that he is the proper and principal Efficient of it. The Evangelist calls him at once, *The Light and the Life of Men*, Joh. i. 4. To say nothing of him as a Treasure, he is the Source of our spiritual Life and Motion.

When the Sun takes its Course towards us in the Season of the Year, it drives away the sharp Frosts and the heavy Fogs of Winter, it clears the Heavens, decks the Earth with Variety of Plants and Flowers, and awakes the Birds to the pleasant Strains of their natural Musick. When Christ, after a kind of Winter-absence, returns to visit a declining Church, admirable is the Change that he produces; all begins to flourish by his sweet Influence; his House, his Worship, his People, are all clothed with a new Beauty, but it is spiritual; and therefore none but spiritual
Eyes

Eyes can discern it. When he will thus return, all the Power and Policy of Man can no more hinder him, than it could stay the Course of the Sun in its Circle. In like manner, a deserted forsaken Soul, that can do nothing but languish and droop, while Christ withdraws himself, what inexpressible Vigour and Alacrity finds it at his returning? Then those Graces, that while they lurkt, seem'd to have been lost and quite extinguished, bud forth anew with pleasant Colour and fragrant Smell. 'Tis the Light of his Countenance that banisheth their false Fears, that strengthens their Faith, and cures their spiritual Infirmities. This Sun is indeed the sovereign Physician: *Unto you that fear my Name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing under his Wings,* Mal. iv. 2.

Finally, All Darknes flies away before him: It was his arising in the World that made the Day break and the Shadows fly away. The Types and Shadows of the Law were then abolished. It was his Light that dispelled the Mists of Ignorance and Idolatry, and he alone delivers the Soul from the Night of Sin and Misery procured by it: All the Stars, and the Moon with them, cannot make it Day in the World; this is the Sun's *Peculiar*: Nor can Nature's highest Light, the most refined Science and Morality, make it Day in the Soul; for this is *Christ's*.

The common Light of Reason, every Man that comes into the World hath from him as his Creator, but the special Light of Grace they alone that are *born again* have from him as their Saviour. Gross is the Darknes of every natural Mind, till Christ enlighten it. It can neither discern nor receive the Things of God, *οὐ δέχεται*. *Ye were Darknes,* (says the Apostle) *but now are you Light in the Lord.* It is nothing else but a Mass of Darknes; and the Companion of Darknes is Confusion, as it was in the Mass of the World before Light was created. And what is there under Heaven more confused than a carnal Mind? The Affections quite out of Order,
and

and though all naught, yet sometimes fighting one with another, and continually hurrying the Judgment whither they please. Now to dissipate this Darknes, and remedy this Confusion, Christ shines externally in his Word: But too much daily Experience testifies, that this is not sufficient; therefore to those whom he will make Children of the Light, to meet with this outward Light of his Word, he gives another internal by the Spirit. The Sun can make dark Things clear, but it cannot make a blind Man see them: But herein is the Excellency of this Sun, that he illuminates not only the *Object*, but the *Faculty*; doth not only reveal the Mysteries of his Kingdom, but opens blind Eyes to behold them. And the first Lineament of the renewed Image of God in Man, is that Light in the Understanding, removing not only that simple Ignorance of Divine Things, but these Misconceits likewise, and false Principles, and that wicked Pertinacy, whereof Man's Mind is naturally full. He that *at first commanded Light to shine out of Darknes*, infuseth saving Knowledge and Light into the dark Soul of Man. And this Light (as was said) kindles Love. It is *vehiculum caloris*, hath a powerful Influence, begetting Heat in the Affections. Nor can this Divine Light be ever again fully extinguished, but conducts the Soul that hath received it, till it be received to the Land of Light and perfect Happiness. Thus in our Redeemer is *the Fountain of Life*, as the Psalmist speaks. *And in his Light do we see Light*, Psal. xxxvi. 9.

He is likewise here stiled, *The Glory of the Lord*. In 2 Sam. 4th Chap. the Ark of God is called *the Glory*, but it enjoyeth that Name as a Type of Christ, in whom that now which the Ark contained was fulfilled. The Tabernacle is called *the Dwelling of God's Glory*, Psal. xxvi. 8. likewise typifying him in the Tabernacle, in whose human Nature that Glory dwells far more excellently, Job. i. 14. ΕΣΧΗΝΩΣΕΝ ΕΝ ΗΜΙΝ, *he dwelt in a Tabernacle among us, and we saw his Glory as the Glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace*

and Truth. The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls him ἀπαύγασμα, *the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the Character of his Person*, Heb. i. 3. And under these Expressions lies that remarkable Mystery of the Son's eternal Relation to the Father, which is rather humbly to be adored than boldly to be explained, either by God's perfect understanding of his own Essence, or by any other Notion. It is true, he is called *the Wisdom of the Father*, but this Wisdom is too wonderful for us. He is called *the Word*, but what this Word means, I think, we shall not well know till we see him Face to Face, and contemplate him in the Light of Glory. Mean while we may see him to be the Glory of the Lord in a safer Way, and sufficient Measure to guide us on to that clear Vision reserved above for us. *We saw his Glory*, says that sublime Evangelist. But how could this excellent Glory be seen by sinful Men, and not astonish and strike dead the Beholders? *He was made Flesh, and dwelt among us*, (says he,) *and so we saw his Glory*. That Majesty that we could never have lookt upon, he veiled with human Flesh, that we might not die, wea live, by seeing him. There he stood behind the Wall, and shewed himself through the Trellis. *In him dwelt the Fulness of the Godhead*, Col. ii. 9. but it was σωματικῶς, *bodily*: For who could have endured the Splendor of the Godhead's Fulness, if that Cloud of his Body had not been drawn betwixt? And through it did shine that Grace and Truth, that Wisdom and Power in the Work of our Redemption, whereby he was clearly manifested to be the Glory of the Lord.

Surely we need not now ask the Church, or a believing Soul, *What is her Beloved more than another?* Or if we do, well may she answer, *He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely*; for he is *the Light of the World, and the Glory of the Lord*. Let not the numerous Titles of earthly Potentates be once admitted into Comparison with these. If we believe David in his 62d Psal. 9th Vers. the stateliest Things

and Persons in the World being balanced with *Vanity* itself, are found lighter than *it*: And shall we offer to weigh them with Christ? If we knew him rightly, we would not sell the least Glance or Beam of this Light of his Countenance for the highest Favour of mortal Men, tho' it were constant and unchangeable, which it is not. It is Ignorance of Christ that maintains the Credit of those Vanities we admire. The Christian that is truly acquainted with him, enamoured with the Brightness of his Beauty, can generously trample upon the Smilings of the World with the one Foot, and her Frownings with the other. If he be rich or honourable, or both, yet he glories not in that, but Christ, who is *the Glory of the Lord*, is even then his chiefest Glory; and the Light of Christ obscures that worldly Splendor in his Estimation. And as the Enjoyment of Christ overtops all his other Joys, so it overcomes his Grievs. As that great Light drowns the Light of Prosperity, it shines bright in the Darknes of Affliction: No Dungeon so close that can keep out the Rays of Christ's Love from his beloved Prisoners. The World can no more take away this Light, than it can give it. *Unto the just ariseth Light in Darknes*, saith the Psalmist: And, *when I sit in Darknes, the Lord shall be a Light unto me*, says the Church in the 7th of *Micah*, 8th Verse. And as this Light is a *Comfort*, so is it likewise a *Defence*, that suffers no more of Distress to come near the Godly than is profitable for them. Therefore we find very frequently in Scripture, where this Light and Glory is mentioned, Protection and Safety jointly spoken of: *The Lord is my Light, and withal my Salvation, whom shall I fear*, says David, Psal. xxvii. 1. *The Lord is a Sun, and he is a Shield too*, Ps. lxxxiv. 21. and truly I think him Shot-proof that hath the Sun for his Buckler, And for Glory; *Upon all the Glory shall be a Defence*, says our Prophet in his 4th Chap. 5th Ver. and the Prophet *Zachary*, where he calls the Lord the Church's *Glory in the midst of her*, he calls him likewise a *Wall of Fire round about her*, Zach. ii. 4.

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The only Way then to be safe, is to keep this Light and this Glory entire. To part with any Part of this Glory, is to make a Breach in that Wall of Fire; and that be a Means of Safety, let all Men judge. No, keep it whole, and then they must come through the fire that will assault you. Nor is this Light only defensive of the Church that embraceth it, but likewise destructive of all adverse Powers. See a clear Testimony for this, in *Isa. x. 17, 18.* *And the Light of Israel shall be for a Fire, and his holy One for a Flame, speaking there of the Assyrians) and it shall burn and devour his Thorns and his Briers in one Day, and shall consume the Glory of his Forest, and of his fruitful Field, both soul and Body, and they shall be as when a Standard-bearer fainteth, &c.* Let ever then the Church of God entirely observe this *Light and Glory* of the Lord; and she shall undoubtedly be preserved by it.

But to close in a Word, first to those that know this Light, and then to those that are yet Strangers to it.

You who know Christ, glory in him perpetually. Well may he be your Glory, when he is the Glory of the Lord. There are some that pretend Love to Christ, and yet a taunting Word of some profane Discreant will almost make them ashamed of him; how would they dy for Christ that are so tender as not to endure a Scoff for him? Where is that Spirit *Moses*, that accounted the very Reproaches of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of *Egypt*? Learn to glory in Christ, think highly of him, and speak so too. Methinks it is the Discourse in the World becomes Christians best, to be speaking one to another honourably of Jesus Christ; and of all Men, the Preachers of his Gospel should be most frequent in this Subject. This should be their great Theme, to extol and commend the Lord Jesus, that they may flame many Hearts with his Love: And best can they do this, who are most strongly taken with this Love themselves. Such will most gladly abase themselves, that Christ may be magnified; and whatsoever

be their Excellencies, they still account Christ their Glory: And they are richly repaid, for he accounts them his Glory. This would seem a strange Word, if it were not the Apostle's, *They are the Messengers of the Churches, and the Glory of Christ*, 2 Cor. viii. 23. Delight who will, either in Sloth and Ignorance on the one hand, or in vain Speculations and Strains of frothy Wit on the other; surely those Preachers shall only be approved in the great Day, who have constantly endeavoured in their Measure to speak the best and fittest they could for their Master's Advantage. And happy these Christians, of what Estate soever, that in all Estates make Christ their Glory, and in all Actions have their Eye fixed upon his Glory, who is their Light and the Glory of the Lord!

Now to those that are Strangers to him, (would to God none that are to be spoken to were such;) to them, I say, Notice would be given both of the Excellency and Necessity of Christ. Tho' it were possible to grope the Way to Happiness in the Dark, yet none will deny but to be conducted thither by a constant Light, is both more safe and more delightful. But were there any Possibility to attain that End without this Light, the Neglect of it were not altogether so strange. The Wonder of all is this, that Christ alone being both that Life, and the Way to it, and the Truth or Light that guides in that Way, yet Christians (so called) should esteem and look after him as little, as if he were wholly needless. What meanest thou, O besotted Sinner? Is it so light a thing to dy in thy Sins, and eternally for them, that thou wilt not so much as open and admit the Light of Salvation? What shalt thou pretend in that terrible Day? Tho' all other kind of People should offer some Excuse, thou who hast heard the Gospel shalt be speechless. For not only shall the Rigour of Justice condemn thee, but Mercy itself shall plead against thee; for thou hast despised it. That Light did come, and was not embraced, shall be the more Condemnation. How many thousands that make

Doubt of Heaven, yet sha'l then fall short of it? It is not a superficial Profession that will then pass current. It is not some public Sighs and Groans from an unsanctified Heart, which either come from Custom, or some present Touch of the Word; nor yet is it some sudden Risings of inward Affection towards Christ, upon the Report of his Worth, that shall then serve the Turn. The intellectual Knowledge of Christ, the distinct understanding, yea the orthodox preaching of his Gospel, the maintaining of this public Cause, and suffering for it, shall not then be found sufficient. Only that peculiar Apprehension of Christ, those constant Flames of spiritual Love, that even Course of holy walking in his Light, shall be these Characters whereby Christ shall own his Children, and admit them into the Inheritance of perfect Light. One of the Speakers in the Book of *Job*, discoursing of the Prosperity of the Ungodly, calls it but *his Candle*, and tells how long it can last: *His Candle* (says he) *shall be put out with him*; and that's the longest Term of it: If it last his Lifetime, it shall convey him no further, he goes into Eternity in the Dark; and therefore, as St. *John* says, he knows not whither he goeth. *Quò nunc abibis?* said that Emperor to his Soul. Is it not a sad thing, when the Soul that knows no other but worldly Light, must take Leave of it, and enter into eternal Darkness, there to be incessantly tormented with present Anguish, and the frightful Expectation of the last Judgment, where it must take again that Body which was the Complice of its Wickedness to be Partaker of its Punishment; where it shall have a double Misery to behold Crowns of Immortality distributed to the Godly, after the short Combats of this life, and itself thrust out among the Devils? Then shall all Men be some way sensible, what is the Worth of this new contemned Light, the Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest Number too late, for they shall be banish'd from it for ever. But the Righteous shall then most perfectly know, and for

ever enjoy this Light and Glory of the Lord. *To whom with the Father of Lights and Spirit of Grace, be Eternity of Praise and Honour.*

S E R M O N VI.

P R E F A C E.

WHAT shall it profit a Man, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul, said our Saviour, who was to lay down a Ransom for it, and knew well that it would cost infinitely more than the World was worth. Yet the most of Men value their own Souls at a far lower Rate than the whole World, losing them for broken Mercenary of it; yea many times for vain Hopes that are never accomplished. And as these Men make a miserable Bargain, so, by the contrary, they that lose the World, or any thing worldly, yea, tho' it were the whole, to save their Souls, make a profitable Loss of it. Nature teaches Men to hazard and lose all for the Life of the Body, rather than lose it, (although it prove many Times very uncomfortable by the loss of these outward Things) and yet the most Part of Men pass their whole Lifetime without one serious Thought of the Excellency and Importance of their Souls, whose Life and Happiness is of a higher Nature, and neither consists in, nor depends upon, any thing here below. Hence it is, that while they use the Help of this present Life, and the Defences of it when it is in Danger, and use them with so much Diligence and Attention; the Means of that better Life, of their better Part, their Souls, they either use not at all, or so slightly and coldly, that they never find Salvation in them. You may find it some way in yourselves, if the Threatnings and Preparations of Men against you have awakened and roused you more to think upon

Means

Means of your temporal Safety; but how few are sensible and afraid of the Wrath of God, who, as our Saviour tells us, can kill both Body and Soul, and cast them into Hell. You want not frequent Advertisment from the Word of God, so plentifully preached, that many are perishing; one Part in gross Ignorance of God, another in profane and licentious living, and the greatest Part in a formal and lifeless Profession of Religion, without the Power of it: And yet where are they that lay it to heart, and bestir themselves to rescue their Souls from Destruction? Certainly whatsoever Men profess, it is Unbelief that is the Cause of Impenitence. Men are not convinced of the Purity of God's Nature, nor sensible of the Impurity of their own, therefore they apply not themselves in good earnest to the Work of Repentance, and Reformation the liveliest Part of it. Labour then for a more active and practical Knowledge of God and divine Truths, such as may humble and renew your Souls; not only that you may be delivered from outward Troubles that threaten you, but much more, that you may escape the Wrath to come. And because neither the Word preached, nor Judgments nor Mercies that are set before you, are sufficient to quicken a dead Soul, or soften a hard Heart, without the effectual Concourse of the Spirit of God, let us have Recourse to the Throne of Grace, by humble and earnest Prayer, in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ.

PSAL. XLII. 8.

Let the Lord will command his loving Kindness in the Day-time, and in the Night his Song shall be with me, and my Prayer unto the God of my Life.

MAN is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards, saith Eliphaz, Job v. 7. and as it is the Corruption and Sinfulness of his Birth and Nature that has exposed him to Trouble, so Nature usually sets him at work, to look out for such Things as may preserve and deliver him from Trouble, or, at least,

mitigate and temper the Bitterness of it. And because there is not any one worldly Thing that hath either Certainty or Sufficiency enough to serve at all Times, therefore worldly and natural Men are forced to make use of Variety, and are but badly served with them all. The believing Soul hath but one Comfort whereon he relies, but it is a great one, which alone weighs down all the rest. *Bread strengthens, and Wine makes glad the Heart of Man*, Psal. civ. 15. *But God is the Strength of my Heart*, (says the Psalmist) *Psal. lxxiii. 26.* and the Gladness of it too. *Thou hast put Gladness in my Heart, more than they have when their Corn and Wine increaseth*, Psal. iv. 7. And therefore, while the rest are seeking after some scattered Crumbs of Goodness in the Creatures, *Who will shew us any good?* he fixes his Choice upon this one Thing, *the Light of God's Countenance*. And it is the constant Assurance of this that upholds him, *Waves beat upon him, yea, and go over him, yet the Lord will command his loving Kindness to shine upon him*.

In this Psalm we may perceive the Psalmist full of perplexed Thoughts, and that betwixt strong Desires and Grievs; and yet, in the midst of them, now and then, some Advantage, and intermixing Strains of Hope, with his sad Complaints: For, immediately before, we heard nothing but the impetuous Noise of many Waters, *Deep calling unto Deep*, in the former Verse. We have here, as it were, a Touch of the sweet Sound of David's Harp, *Yet the Lord will command his loving Kindness in the Day-time, &c.*

In the Words we have *David's Confidence*, and *David's Purpose*; the one suiting very well with the other. His Confidence in God's loving Kindness; *Yet the Lord will command his loving Kindness*. And his Purpose; *And in the Night his Song shall be with me*.

It is true, those Words (*in the Night his Song shall be with me*) may be taken as a Part of the Expression of his Confidence, taking his Song for the Matter or Subject of the Song, the Goodness of God; as if he should say, "both in the Day and in the Night,

"shall

“ shall find the sweet Fruits of God’s Favour and “ loving Kindness.” But not excluding that, I rather take it intended, as his *Resolution*, that it should be his Custom, in the quiet Season of the Night, to look back upon God’s Goodness manifested to him in the Actions and Occurrences of the Day; and thus entertaining his Soul with that secret Discourse, he would stir it up to the Praises of his God, and withal, would join Prayer for the Continuance, and further Manifestation of it. *David* (as is hinted before) intermixes Strains of Hope, not that faint and common Hope of *Possibility* or *Probability*, that after stormy Days it may be better with him, but a *certain Hope* that shall never make *ashamed*; such a *Hope* as springs from *Faith*, yea, in Effect, is one with it. Faith rests upon the Goodness and Truth of him that hath promised, and Hope raising itself upon Faith so established, stands up and looks out to the future Accomplishment of the Promise. Therefore the Apostle, *Heb. xi. 11.* calls Faith *the Substance of Things hoped for*, ὑπόστασις, and *the Evidence of Things not seen*; of all other *wavering Hope*, is here, they say, *true*. *Spes est nomen boni incerti*, but this can say, *the Lord will command his loving Kindness, &c.*

The Lord will command] What a sudden Change is here! Would you think this were the same Man that was even now almost overwhelmed? Thus Faith always conquers, tho’ seldom or never, without hard Conflict, not only assaulted by Troubles without, but, which is worse, by Incredulity within: Nor assaulted only, but many Times brought under, yet does it not succumb and give over, knowing, that even after many Foils, yet in the End it shall overcome.

His *Confidence* you may consider, first, *oppositely*, and then *positively*, or simply in itself. *Oppositely* both to his present Trouble, and to his Complaints, wherein this Trouble is exprest, and that is fitly implied, tho’ it be not in the Original.

Tho’ the Multitude and Weight of *Job’s Afflictions* did force out of him some bitter Words, and
made

made him look back upon the Day of his Birth, and curse it; yet Faith recovers him from his Distemper, and makes him look forward with Joy, even as far as to the blessed Day of his Resurrection, *Job xix. 25. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth: And tho' after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God.*

The former Words of Impatience he spake indeed, but he adheres to *these*, and wishes that they were written with an Iron Pen, and engraven to abide for ever. Therefore we hear of him again in Scripture, as a righteous and patient Man, but of these Words of his Impatience not a Word. In the 77th Psalm, what sad Expostulations are these the Psalmist uses, *Will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? Deth his Promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in Anger shut up his tender Mercies?* But see how he corrects them, *Ver. 10. Then I said, this is my Infirmary, but I will remember the Years of the Right Hand of the most High.* Thus *Jonah, Chap. ii. Ver. 3, 4*, much like this; but there, literally true. And here *Deep calls unto Deep*, yet in the Midst of those Deeps, Faith is not drowned, you see it lifts up its Head above Water; *Yet the Lord will command, &c.* Yea, tho' it takes particular Notice of God's Hand in the Affliction, yet it goes not to another Hand for Comfort. *Thy Waves and thy Billows*; yet that same God, whose Waves are like to destroy me, will e're long command *his loving Kindness to shine upon me. Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust to him, Job. xiii. 15.* A wonderful Expression of Faith! He says not, tho' he afflict me sore, but tho' he slay me; not tho' evil Men or Satan should do it, but, tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him. What troubled Mind can imagine any thing harder against itself than this?

1. Learn then to check these excessive Doubts and Fears, by some such resolute Word as this. Turn the Promise, first upon thyself, and then upon God.

Consider

Consider that he hath promised Life eternal to Believers, and then say, "Tho' I saw his Hand, as it were, lift up to destroy me, yet from that very Hand will I expect Salvation; for I have his Word engaged for it, that if I believe I shall be saved." I do not say, that a Soul under Temptation can assure itself, that God is already reconciled to it, (and herein possibly lies oftentimes the Mistake;) for this reflex Act of Assurance, tho' it be our Duty to seek after it, itself is rather a Gift and Reward than a Duty. But the direct and proper Act of Faith is of perpetual Use and Necessity, and then most, when there is least Sense of Assurance. And it is no other but a Recumbency or Reliance, rolling over of the Soul upon free Mercy. That which breeds us much Perplexity, is, that we would invert God's Order. "If I knew (say some) that the Promise belonged to me, and Christ were a Saviour to me, I could believe," that is to say, would first see, and then believe. But the true Method is just contrary, *I had fainted, says David, unless I had believed to see the Goodness of the Lord.* He believed it first, and saw it afterwards. And in this same *Psalms*, labouring to still his disquieted Soul, by elevating it above his Troubles, to look upon his God; he says to it, *hope in him now*, and e're it be long, *thou shalt praise him for the Help of his Countenance*, even while his Countenance is with-held. And thus Faith ought to triumph over spiritual Fears and Difficulties.

2. How incongruous is it, that outward Dangers or Trials should over-match it; will you trust God, upon his Word, for Salvation and eternal Happiness, and be diffident for the Safety and needful Blessings of this temporal Life, which Life, in Comparison, is but a Moment, and the best Things of it but Drops? Consider that you dishonour Faith exceedingly, and degenerate from the believing Saints of former Ages. Indeed, the Promises of this Life, and that which concerns it, tho' Godliness hath them, yet they are not so absolute, nor are they so absolutely needful

for you. But considering the Wisdom and Love of your heavenly Father, learn to compose your Minds by it.

I will not be afraid, tho' ten thousands of the People set themselves against me round about, says David, *Psalm. iii. 6.* And lest you think him singular, in the 46th *Psalm*, it is the joint Voice of the whole Church of God, *We will not fear, tho' the Earth be removed, and the Mountains be cast into the Midst of the Sea: Tho' the Waters thereof roar and be troubled; tho' the Mountains shake with the Swelling thereof. There is a River, the Streams whereof make glad the City of God: The holy Place of the Tabernacle of the most high God is in the Midst of her; she shall not be moved.* That is the Way to be immoveable in the Midst of Troubles, as a Rock amidst the Waves. When God is in the Midst of a Kingdom or City, he makes it firm as Mount *Sion*, that cannot be removed. When he is in the Midst of the Soul, tho' Calamities throng about it on all Hands, and roar like the Billows of the Sea, yet there is a constant Calm within, such a Peace as the World can neither give nor take away. On the other Side, what is it but Want of lodging God in the Soul, and that in his Stead, the World is in the Midst of Men's Hearts, that makes them shake like the Leaves of Trees at every Blast of Danger? What a Shame is it, seeing natural Men, by the Strength of Nature, and Help of moral Precepts, have attained such undaunted Resolution and Courage against outward Changes, yet they that would pass for Christians, are so soft and fainting, and so sensible of the smallest Alterations? The Advantage that we have in this Regard is infinite; what is the best Ground-Work of a Philosopher's Constancy, but as moving Sands in Comparison of the Rock that we may build upon? But the Truth is, that either we make no Provision of Faith for Times of Trial, or if any we have, we neither know the Worth, nor the Use of it, but lay it by, as a dead unprofitable Thing, when we should most use and exercise it. Notwithstanding

standing all our frequenting of God's House, and our plausible Profession, is it not too true, that the most of us either do not at all furnish ourselves with these spiritual Arms, that are so needful in the military Life of a Christian, or we learn not how to handle them, and are not in Readiness for Service? As was the Case of that improvident Soldier, whom his Commander found mending some Piece of his Armour, when they were to give Battle. It were not amiss before afflictions overtake us, to try and train the Mind somewhat by supposing the very worst and hardest of them. To say, "What if the Waves and " Billows of Adversity were swelled and flowing in " upon me, could I then believe? God hath said, *I will " not fail thee, nor forsake thee*, with a Heap of Negations, *in no wise, I will not*. He hath said, *when " thou passest through the Fire and through the Water, " I will be with thee*. These I know, and can discourse of them. But could I repose and rest upon " them in the Day of Trial?" Put your Souls to it, is there any Thing or Person that you esteem and love exceedingly; say, *what if I should lose this?* Is there some Evil that is naturally more contrary and terrible to you than many others? Spare not to present that to the Imagination too, and labour to make Faith Master of it beforehand in case it should befall you; and if the first Thought of it scare you, look upon it the oftner, till the Visage of it become familiar to you, that you start and scare no more at it. Nor is there any Danger in these Thoughts. Troubles cannot be the nearer by thus thinking on them: But you may be both safer and stronger, by breathing and exercising of your Faith in supposed Cases. But if you be so tender spirited, that you cannot look upon Calamities so much as in Thought or Fancy, how would you be able for a real Encounter? No, sure. But the Soul that hath made God his Stay, can do both; see it in that notable Resolution of the Prophet, *Hab. iii. 17. Although the Fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive*

Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no Meat, the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. The Lord God is my Strength. And in David, Psal. xxiii. 4. Yea, (says he) tho' I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff, they comfort me. You see how Faith is as Cork to his Soul, keeping it from sinking in the Deeps of Afflictions. Yea, that big Word which one says of his morally just Man is true of the Believer, *si fractus illabatur orbis, tho' the very Fabric of the World were falling about him, yet would he stand upright, and undaunted in the Midst of its Ruins.*

In this Confidence considered in itself, we may observe the Object of it; *The loving Kindness of the Lord.* 2. The Manner or Way by which he expects to enjoy it; *The Lord will command it.* 3. The Time; *in the Day.*

His loving Kindness.] He says not, *return to the House of God, for Deliverance from the heavy Oppression and sharp Reproaches of the Enemy,* which would have answered more particularly and expressly to his present Grievs, but *his loving Kindness.* And the Reason of thus expressing himself, I conceive to be twofold. 1. In the Assurance of this is necessarily comprised the Certainty of all other good Things. This special Favour and Benignity of the Lord, doth engage his Power and Wisdom (both which you know are infinite) to the Procurement of every Thing truly good for those whom he so favours. Therefore it is, that *David* chuses rather to name the Streams of particular Mercies in this their living Source and Fountain, than to specify them severally. Nor is it only thus more compendious, but fuller too, which are the two great Advantages of Speech, and this I take to be the other Reason. 2. A Man may enjoy great Deliverances, and many positive Benefits from the Hand of God, and yet have no Share in his loving Kindness. How frequently doth God heap Riches,

and

and Honour, and Health on those he hates, and the common Gifts of the Mind too, Wisdom and Learning, yea, the common Gifts of his own Spirit, and gives a fair and long Day of external Prosperity, to those on whom he never vouchsafed the least Glance of his favourable Countenance; yea, on the contrary, gives all those specious Gifts to them with a secret Curse? As here he gave a King in Wrath to his People, so he often gives Kingdoms in his Wrath to Kings. Therefore *David* looks higher than the very Kingdom which God promised him, and gave him, when he speaks of *his loving Kindness*. In a Word, he resolves to solace himself with the Assurance of this, tho' he was stript of all other Comforts, and to quiet his Soul herein, till Deliverance come; and when it shall come, and whatsoever Mercies with it, to receive them as Fruits and Effects of this *loving Kindness*: Not prizing them so much for themselves, as for the Impressions of that Love which is upon them. And it is that Image and Supercription that both engages and moves him most to pay his Tribute of Praise. And truly this is every where *David's* Temper; his frequent Distresses and Wants never excite him so much to desire any particular Comfort in the Creature, as to intreat the Presence and Favour of God himself. His saddest Times are, when, to his Sense, this Favour is eclipsed. *In my Prosperity I said I shall not be moved*. And what was his Adversity that made him of another Mind? *Thou hiddest thy Face and I was troubled*. This verifies his Position in that same Psalm, *In thy Favour is Life*. Thus in the 63d Psalm, at the Beginning, *My Soul thirsteth for thee in a dry Land where there is no Water*; not for Water where there is none, but *for thee where there is no Water*. Therefore he adds, in Verse 3d, *Thy loving Kindness is better than Life*: And all that be truly wise, and of this Mind, will subscribe to his Choice. Let them enjoy this loving Kindness and prize it, that whatever befalls them, their Happiness and Joy is above the Reach of all Calamities. Let them

them be derided and reproached abroad, yet still this inward Persuasion makes them glad and contented. As a rich Man said, "Tho' the People hated and taunted him, yet when he came home and looked upon his Chests, *Egom et mihi plaudo domi.*" With how much better Reason do believers bear out external Injuries? What inward Contentment, when they consider themselves truly enriched with the Favour of God. And as this makes them contemn the Contempts that the World puts upon them, so likewise it breeds in them a Neglect and Disdain of those poor Trifles that the World admires. The Sum of their Desires is (as that *Cynick's* was of the Sun-shine) that the Rays of the Love of God may shine constantly upon them. The favourable Aspect and large Profers of Kings and Princes would be unwelcome to them, if they should stand betwixt them and the Sight of that Sun: And truly they have Reason. What are the highest Things the World affords? What are great Honours and great Estates, but great Cares and Grievs well drest and coloured over with a Shew of Pleasure, that promise Contentment, and perform nothing but Vexation? That they are not satisfying, is evident; for the obtaining of much of them doth but stretch the Appetite, and teach Men to desire more. They are not solid neither. Will not the Pains of a Gout, of a Strangury, or some such Malady (to say nothing of the worst, the Pains of a guilty Conscience) blast all these Delights? What Relish finds a Man in large Revenues and stately Buildings, in high Preferments and honourable Titles, when either his Body or Mind is in Anguish? And besides the Emptiness of all these Things, you know they want one main Point, *Continuance*. But the loving Kindness of God, hath all Requisites to make the Soul happy. O *satisfy us early with thy Goodness, (or Mercy)* says *Moses*, *that we may rejoice and be glad all our Days*, Ps. xc. 14. There is *Fulness* in that for the vastest Desires of the Soul, *satisfy us*; there is *solid Contentment*, that begets true Joy and Gladness; and there is *Permanency*, all

our Days. It is the only Comfort of this Life, and Assurance of a better. This were a large Subject to insist on; but certainly the naming of *his loving Kindness* should beget in each Heart an high Esteem of it, an ardent Desire after it. And if it do so with you, then know that it is on'y to be found in the Way of Holiness. He is a holy God, and can love nothing that's altogether unlike himself. There must always be some Similitude and Conformity of Nature to ground Kindness and Friendship, and to maintain it. That Saying is true, *Idem velle & idem nolle, firma amicitia*. What gross Self flattery is it, to think that God's loving Kindness can be towards you, while you are in love with Sin, which he so perfectly hates? How can the profane Swearer, or voluptuous Person, or the Oppressor and Covetous, or the close Hypocrite, (worse than any of them) rest upon the loving Kindness of the Lord in the Day of Troubles? No, sure. But the Terror of his Wrath shall be added to all their other Calamities; and they shall find it heavier than all the rest. God will not pour this precious Oil of Gladness, this persuasion of his Love, into filthy Vessels. Even his own Children, when they grieve and sadden his holy Spirit by Unholiness, shall be sadly punished by the withdrawing of these comforting and sensible expressions of his Love.

Labour then you, that as yet never tasted of this Love, to know what it means. Forsake and hate that which hitherto have made you Strangers to it; for if you obtain this, it shall comfort you when these Things cannot, but would rather prove your greatest Torment. And you that have received any Testimonies of it, entertain it carefully, for it is your best Comfort both in your best Days, and in your worst Days too.

You would all gladly be delivered from these many Evils that threaten you; for many they be indeed, and Peace is a great Blessing. But suppose you were secured from all these fears, and he should command a sudden Calm, (which truly he can do) would

you then think yourselves happy? That Life of yours which you so fear to lose by Fire or Sword, tho' you had Peace, would ere long fall into the Hands of some Ague, or Fever, or Consumption, and perish by them, or at the longest, a few Years will end it. It is a lighted Candle, that tho' no Body blow out, will quickly burn out of itself. But this loving Kindness is not so short-lived, it shall last as long as your Souls; and so long as it lasts, they shall be happy. Those Goods that you fear shall be pillaged and spoiled in War, how many Hazards are they subject to even in Peace? *Solomon* tells you, *That Riches oftentimes* (tho' no Body take them away) *make themselves Wings, and fly away.* And truly many times the undue sparing of them is but the letting of their Wings grow, which makes them readier to fly away; and the contributing a part of them to do Good, only clips their Wings a little, and makes them stay the longer with their Owner: But this by the Way. Howsoever, *in the Day of Death, and in the Day of Wrath,* as *Solomon* says, *they profit nothing at all,* Prov. xi. 4. So then, tho' you may desire that God would command Deliverance for you; yet, if you would be truly happy, your greater and more earnest Suit would be, that he command his *loving Kindness* to appear to your Souls. And having once obtained this, you may possibly be persecuted, and endure hard Trials, but one Thing is made sure, you cannot be miserable: Nor shall you want temporal Mercies and Preservation too, so far as they are good for you. The inward Assurance of this Love shall carry you strangely and sweetly through all outward Vicissitudes; and when the Day shall come, that all other Comforts shall look pale upon you, then shall you find the Worth and Happiness of this more than ever before.

Command] Make it appear to me. Sometimes God is said to shut up, and hide his Love from his Children, and that is a mournful time with them. But we read not that he shuts out Love, and ceaseth altogether

together to have affection to those whom once he loved. And therefore when he shews himself again in the gracious Manifestations of his Mercy, he is not said to begin anew to love them, but only to command his Love, which e're while he had countermanded to appear.

In the Day] If you have a mind to take the *Day* and *Night* figuratively, for prosperous and adverse Times, it would lead you, in that Sense, to observe *David's* Constancy in God's Praises, that not only in the Day of Deliverance, but even in the Night of Distress, he resolved a Song for God. And truly many times God gives his Children in an afflicted Condition, more Sweetness of Spirit, and Aptitude, not only to pray, but to praise; and more spiritual Delight in himself, than in Times of outward Peace and Prosperity. *He giveth Songs in the Night*, saith *Job*; and you know the Sound of Musick is most delightful in the Night. But to take it properly, he is confident that in the several Actions and Occurrences of the Day he should find the *Goodness and favourable Assistance* of the Lord, and then he resolves. Which leads to the other Part of the Text,

In the Night-time to meditate on that Goodness, and frame a Song of Praise to the Author of it.

And indeed what is the whole Thread of our Life but a checkered Twist, black and white, of Delights and Dangers interwoven? And the happiest passing of it, is constantly to enjoy, and to observe the Experiences of God's Goodness, and to praise him for them. *David* was a wise King, and withal a valiant Soldier, and yet we see he thought not this Experience unconsonant with either of these two Conditions. This precious Book of *Psalms* (a great Part thereof being his) testifies clearly, that Prayer and Praises were his great Employment. A religious Disposition of Mind may not only consist with Fortitude and Magnanimity, but is indeed the best Principle and Cause of both, contrary to the wicked and foolish Opinion of profane Persons. Whether of the two,

do you think, might welcome a Day of Battle with most Courage and Resolution, he that had past the preceeding Night in revelling and carousing, or he that had spent it in Prayer, and obtained some Assurance of a better Life? Truly if they went on with equal Forwardness, there is no Man, except he were an Atheist, but would judge the one to be brutish Fury and Precipitation, and the other true Valour.

His Song] In the worst Estate there is ever some Matter of Praise to be mixed with Request; and truly we may justly suspect that our neglect of Praise makes our Prayers unacceptable.

And my Prayer] In the best Estate here below Praise must be accompanied with Prayer. Our Wants and Necessities, and Straits, return daily upon us, and require new Supplies of Mercy; and Prayer, if we know how to use it right, is the Way to obtain them all,

To the God of my Life] Or *the God that is my Life* This Word is added, as the Reason of all that went before. If you ask *David* why he reposeth so much upon the loving Kindness of God? what he means is, spend so much Pains in Praises and Prayer to God. He answers, "*Because he is my Life.* He is the Author and Preserver of my temporal Life; and all the Passages and Accidents of it are in his Hand alone: He hath also given me, and he maintaineth in me a spiritual Life, yea he is the Life of my Soul; it lives by Union with him, as my Body does by Union with it, and he hath laid out Life eternal for me." Would Christians think thus indeed, the Light of this Consideration would dispel their distrustful Fears. Certainly there is Atheism at the Bottom of them; if not a Denial nor Misconceit of God, at least a Forgetfulness of God. See *Isa. li. 12, 13.* *I, even I am he that comforteth you: Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a Man that shall die, and of the Son of Man, which shall be made as Grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the*

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Foundations of the Earth, &c. Consider then that Men have no Power of our present Life, but by the Appointment of God. And beside that we have another Life, which is infinitely more precious than this, Life spiritual, and which is the beginning of eternal life; and this is altogether out of their Danger, *Col. ii. 3. Our Life is hid with Christ in God. It is hid,* and wicked Men cannot so much as see it: How then should they take it from us, seeing it is *hid*, and that not meanly, it is *hid with Christ in God*? What then shall become of it? Read the next Verse, and read it to your Comfort, for there is abundance in it, if you look right upon it, *When Christ who is our Life shall appear, we likewise shall appear with him in Glory.* They that are in God, being united to him through Christ, can never by any Power be separated from him. It is an indissoluble Union: Death itself, that is the great Dissolver of all other Unions civil and natural, is so far from untying this, that it consummates it; it conveys the Soul into the nearest and fullest Enjoyment of God, who is its Life, where it shall not need to desire that God would *command*, or *send his loving Kindness*, as it were at a Distance, it shall be then at the Spring-head, and shall be satisfied with his Love for ever, &c.

S E R M O N VII.

P R E F A C E.

WHEREFORE do you spend Money for that which is not Bread, and your Labour for that which satisfies not? says the Prophet *Isa.* v. 2. All Men agree in this, that they would willingly meet with some satisfying Good; and yet if you look right upon the Projects and Labours of the

greatest Part, you shall find them flying from it, and taking much Pains to be miserable. And truly considering the Darknes that is upon the Soul of Man, it is no great Wonder to see these miss their Way, and continue wandring, that hear not the Voice of the Gospel to recall them, and see not its Light to direct them. But this is somewhat strange, that where true Happiness, and the true Way to it, is propounded and set before Men, so few should follow it in good Earnest. If the Excellency of that Good did not allure them, yet one would think that their many Disappointments in all other Things should drive them home to it. How often do we run ourselves out of breath after Shadows? and when we think we have overtaken them, and would lay hold on them, we find nothing. And yet still we love to befool ourselves, even against our own Experience, which, we say, uses to make Fools wiser. Still we chuse rather to shift from one Vanity to another, than to return to that *sovereign Good*, that alone can fill the vastest Desires of our Souls; rather to run from one *broken Cistern to another*, as the Prophet calls them, yea and to take Pains to hew them out, than have Recourse to that *Fountain of living Waters*. One main Thing that makes Men thus rove and wander is, that they do not reflect upon their own Course; nor themselves, what is the main End they aim at, and then see whether their Way be suitable to that End. If they would be happy (as who would not) then sure, Things that are empty and uncertain, and certainly perishing, will not serve the Turn. And truly as this Thought would be seasonable at any Time, so especially to us in these Times wherein, besides the common Uncertainty of outward Things, there is an apparent visible Hazard that Mens Lives and Fortunes are like'y to be put to. Will you make Advantage and gain of your Trouble? Thus, the looser you find other things tied to you, and as it were upon a running Knot, secure that one thing, and your Portion in it, which is worth all the rest, yea far above them

them all, and that alone which can be secured, and made certain. Wanting this, what though you had Peace and Health, and all imaginable Prosperity, you would still be miserable, being liable to the Wrath of God, and eternal Destruction. But if once united to Christ, and in him reconciled to God, and entitled to Heaven, what can fall amiss to you? You shall have Joy in the midst of Sorrow and Affliction, and Peace in the midst of War, yea and Life in Death. But think not to attain this Assurance, while you continue profane and godless, not seeking it in the Way of Holiness, for there alone it is to be found, and withal beg it of God by humble Prayer.

PSALM CXIX. 136.

Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes: Because they keep not thy Law.

Love is the leading Passion of the Soul, all the rest follow the Measure and Motion of it, as the lower Heavens are said to be wheel'd about with the first.

We have here a clear instance of it in the Psalmist, testifying his Love to God, by his Esteem and Love of the Law or Word of God. What is each of the several Verses of this Psalm but a several Breathing and Vent of this Love, either in itself, or in the Causes, or in the Effects of it? Where he sets forth the Excellencies and Utilities of God's Law, there you have the *Causes* of his Love; his observing and studying it, his desire to know it more, and observe it better, these are the *Effects* of his Affection to it. The Love itself he often expresseth, *Ver. 47, 48, 113.* and *Ver. 140. Thy word is pure, therefore thy Servant loveth it,* and *Ver. 127. I love thy Commandments above Gold, yea above fine Gold.* But as scarce accounting that Love which can be uttered how much it is, *Ver. 97.* he expresseth it most, by intimating that he cannot express it; *O how I love thy Law!* Hence are his Desires (which are Love in Pursuit) so earnest after it.

Amongst many that is pathetical, *Ver. 20. My Soul breaketh for the Longing that it hath unto thy Judgments at all Times.* Hence likewise his Joy and Delight, (which are Love in Possession) *Ver. 14. I have rejoiced in the Way of thy Testimonies as in all Riobes; and Ver. 16. I will delight myself in thy Statutes; I will not forget thy Word.* We have his Hatred of Things opposite, which is Love's Antipathy, *Ver. 113. I hate vain Thoughts: But thy Law do I love.* And *163 Ver. I hate and abhor Lying: But thy Law do I love.* And in the *139 Ver.* you shall find his Zeal, (which is no other but the Fire of Love stirred up or blown into a Flame) *My Zeal hath consumed me: Because mine Enemies have forgotten thy Words.* And (to omit the rest) in the *158 Ver.* his Love to the Law shews its Sympathy in Sorrow, for the Violation of the Law, *I beheld the Transgressors, and was grieved: Because they kept not thy Word.* And here you find this Grief swelling to such a Heighth, that it runs over into abundant Tears. *Rivers of Water run down mine Eyes; because they keep not thy Law.*

The Words have briefly, *these Rivers*, in their Channel and Course, *They run down mine Eyes*; in their Spring and Cause, to wit, his Sympathy with God's Law broken by Men, in the latter Clause of the Verse, *Because they keep not thy Law.* But both together clearly teach us, *That godly Men are affected with deep Sorrow for the Sins of the ungodly.*

More particularly consider, (1.) The Object of this Affection. (2.) The Nature of it. (3.) The Degree or Measure of it. (4.) Its Subject.

I. The *Object* is the Transgression of the Law, or to take it (as in the Text) *in concreto*, Men Transgressors of the Law. *They keep not thy Law.* It is true, the whole Creation groaneth under the Burden of Sin in Effects of it, as the Apostle speaks; but Sin itself is Man's Enemy, he being that reasonable Creature to whom the Law was given. Now in the general, it is Matter of Grief to a godly Mind, to consider the universal Depravedness of Man's Nature; that he

is a Transgressor from the Womb, that the carnal Mind is Enmity against God, not subject to his Law, neither, while it remains such, can it be, Rom. viii. 6. And this Grief will go the deeper, by remembring from whence he is fallen. When he was new come forth of the Hands of his Maker, that Image of God that he stamped upon him, shined bright in his Soul: The whole Frame of it was regular and comely, the inferior Faculties obeying the higher, and all of them subject unto God. But how soon was he seduced, and then what a great Change ensued? *Quantum mutatus ab illo?* There is ever since such a Tumult and Confusion in the Soul, that it cannot hear the Voice of God's Law, much less obey and keep it. Hence is that Complaint of the Psalmist oftner than once, *They are all gone out of the Way, and become abominable, there is none that doth Good, no not one.* *Mundus immundus in ἀδικία κείται*, lies buried in it, as the Word is used in the Inscription of Tombs *ἐν δαδὲ κείται*. Look abroad in the World, and what shall ye see but a Sea of Wickedness over the Face of the whole, which draws from a godly discerning Eye that beholds it, these Rivers of Tears? The greatest Part not knowing the true God, nor the true Religion, and the true way of his Worship. And for those that do, yet how unlike are they to it in their Lives! The reformed Churches this Way, how unreformed in a great Part!

But more particularly to branch this out a little in several Sorts of Men; this godly Grief is a very large sphere, it will extend to remote People, remote every way, not only in Place, but in Manners and Religion, even to Heathens and gross Idolaters. Yea, the very Sins of Enemies, and of such as are profest Enemies to God, yet moves the tender-hearted Christian to Sorrow and Compassion. *Of whom I now tell you weeping, that they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ,* philip. iii. 18. *Enemies*, and yet he speaks of them *weeping*. What he writes concerning them he would have written in Tears, if that had been legible. Thus
you

you see the *Extension* of this Grief. But yet, out of all Question, it will be more *intensive* in Particulars of nearer Concernment. It is the Burden of the pious Man's Heart, that his Law who made the World, and gives Being to all Things, should be so little regarded, and so much broken through all the World; but yet more especially that in his own Church amongst his own People, Transgression should abound. Sins within the Church are most properly Scandals. God manifests himself (so to speak) most sensible of those, and therefore the godly Man is so too. Whether they be the continual Enormities of licentious and profane Persons, which are by external Profession in the Face of the visible Church, though indeed they be in it, but as *Spots* and *Blemishes*, as the Apostle speaks. Or whether it be the Apostacy of Hypocrites, or (which sometimes falls out) the gross Falls of true Converts. All these are the great Grief of the Godly. The Relations of Men either natural or civil will add something too. This Sorrow will be greater than ordinary in a Christian, he will melt in a particular Tenderness for the Sins of his Kindred, Parents or Children, Husband or Wife; and most of all Ministers for their People. How pathetically does this appear in St. Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 21. *And lest when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the Uncleannefs and Fornication, and Lasciviousness, which they have committed.* A Man cannot but be more particularly touched with the Sins of that Nation, and of that City, and Congregation, and Family, whereof he is a Member, 2 Pet. ii. 8. *For that righteous Man dwelling among them, seeing and bearing, vexed his righteous Soul, from Day to Day, with their unlawful Deeds.* The Sins of more eminent Persons, either in Church or Commonwealth, will most affect a prudent Christian, because their Inclinations and Actions import the Public much. Therefore the Apostle, when he had exhorted to Supplications and Prayers for all Men, he particular

cularly mentions *Kings*, and *such as are in Authority*. And truly, when they are abused by Misadvice and corrupt Counsel, some of these Tears were very well spent, if poured forth before God in their Behalf; for in his Hand (as that wise King confesseth) are their Hearts, compared to Rivers of Waters. Let their Motion be never so impetuous, yet he turns them whither he pleaseth. And who knows but these Rivers of Waters, these Tears, may prevail with the Lord to reduce the violent Current of that River (a King's Heart) from the wrong Channel?

II. But to proceed: The second Thing to be considered in this Affection, is the *Nature* of it. (1.) It is not a Stoical Apathy, and affected Carelessness, much less a delightful partaking with sinful Practices. (2.) Not a proud setting off their own Goodness, with marking the Sin of others, as the *Pharisee* did in the Gospel. (3.) Not the Derision and Mocking of the Folly of Men, with that *laughing Philosopher*; it comes nearer to the Temper of the *other* that wept always for it. It is not a bitter, bilious Anger, breaking forth into Railings and Reproaches, nor an upbraiding Insultation. Nor is it a vindictive Desire of Punishment, venting itself in Curses and Imprecations, which is the rash Temper of many, but especially of the vulgar Sort. The Disciples Motion to Christ was far different from that Way, and yet he says to them, *You know not of what Spirit ye are*. They thought they had been of *Elias* his Spirit, but he told them they were mistaken, and did not know of what a Spirit they were in that Motion. Thus heady Zeal often mistakes and flatters itself. We find not here a Desire of Fire to come down from Heaven upon the Breakers of the Law, but such a Grief as would rather bring Water to quench it, if it were falling on them, *Rivers of Waters*, &c.

III. The *Degree* of this Sorrow, it is vehement, not slight, transient Dislike, but a deep Resentment, such causeth not some few Sighs, or some Drops of Tears, but Rivers*. It is true, the *Measure and*

* *Palge maijim. Pelagus aquarum.*

*Degree of Sorrow for Sin, whether their own or others, are different in divers Persons, that are yet true Mourners, and they are also different in the same Person, at divers Times, not only upon the Difference of the Cause, but even where the Cause is equal, upon the different Influence and Working of the Spirit of God. Sometimes it pleaseth him to warm and melt the Heart more abundantly, and so he raises these Rivers, in these Eyes, to a higher Tide than ordinary. Sometimes they remove again, but yet this godly Sorrow is always serious and sincere; and that is the other Quality here remarkable in it. It is not a histrionical Weeping, only in publick; for the Speech is here directed to God, as a more frequent Witness of these Tears than any other, who is always the Witness of the Sincerity of them, even when they cannot be hid from the Eyes of Men; (for I deny not but they may and should have Vent in publick, especially at such Times as are set apart for solemn Mourning and Humiliation.) Yet, even then, usually these Streams run deepest, where they are stillest and most quietly conveyed. But howsoever, sure they would not be fewer, and less frequent alone, than in Company, for that is a little subject to Suspicion, Jer. ix. 1. *Oh that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night for the slain of the Daughter of my People.* And xiii. 17. *But if ye will not hear it, my Soul shall weep in secret Places for your Pride, and mine Eye shall weep sore, and run down with Tears, because the Lord's Flock is carried away captive.**

IV. The Subject of this Affection is, not the Ungodly themselves that are profest Transgressors of the Law, they rather make a Sport of Sin, as Solomon speaks; they play and make themselves merry with it, as the *Philistines* did with *Sampson*, till it bring the House down about their Ears: But the Godly are they that are affected with this Sorrow, such are careful Observers of the Law themselves, and mourn first for their own Breaches, for these are the only fit Mourners for the Transgression of others.

Now to enquire a little into the *Cause* of this, Why the breaking of God's Law should cause such Sorrow in the Godly, as here breaketh forth into Abundance of Tears; we shall find it very reasonable if we consider, 1. The Nature of Sin, which is the Transgression or Breach of the Law, as the Apostle defines it. 2. The Nature of this Sorrow and these Tears. 3. The Nature of the Godly.

1. Sin is the greatest Evil in the World, yea, truly, in comparison, it alone is worth the Name of *Evil*, and therefore may justly challenge Sorrow, and the greatest Sorrow. The greatest of Evils it is; both *formally*, in that it alone is the Defilement and Deformity of the Soul; and *casually*, being the Root from whence all other Evils spring; the fruitful Womb that conceives and brings forth all those Miseries that either Man feels, or hath Cause to fear. Whence are all those personal Evils incident to Men in their Estates, or in their Bodies, or Minds, outward Turmoils and Diseases, and inward Discontents, and Death itself, in all the Kinds of it; are they not all the Fruits of that bitter Root? Whence arise these publick Miseries of Nations and Kingdoms, but from the epidemick National Sins of the People, as the deserving and procuring Cause at God's Hand? And withal, oftentimes from the ambitious and wicked Practices of some particular Men, as the working and effecting Causes: So that every way, if we follow these Evils home to their Original, we shall find it to be Sin, or the breaking of God's Law. Ungodly Men, tho' they meddle not with public Affairs at all, yea, tho' they be faithful and honest in meddling with them, yet by reason of their impious Lives, are Traitors to their Nation; they are truly the Incendiaries of States and Kingdoms. And these Mourners, tho' they can do no more, are the loyalest and most serviceable Subjects, bringing Tears to quench the Fire of Wrath, *Rivers of Waters*. And therefore Sorrow and Tears are not only most due to Sin, as the greatest of Evils, but they are best bestowed upon

it, if they can do any thing to its Redress, because that is both the surest and most compendious Way to remedy all the rest, Sin being the Source and Spring of them all.

This is the Reason why *Jeremiab*, ix. 1. when he would weep for the *Slain* of his People, is straight-way led from that to bewail the *Sin* of his People, *Ver.* 2, 3, &c. And in his Book of *Tears* and *Lamentations*, he often reduces all these sad Evils to Sin as causing them, particularly *Chap.* v. 16. *The Crown is fallen from our Head, wo unto us that we have sinned.* He turns the Complaint more to the Sin than to the Affliction.

2. Consider the Nature of these Tears. Tears spent for worldly Crosses are all lost; they run all to waste; they are *lacrymæ inanes*, empty fruitless Things: But Tears shed for the Breach of God's Law, are the Means to quench God's Wrath. The Prayers and Tears of some few, may avert the Punishment of many, yea, of a whole Land; and if not so, yet are they not lost, the Mourners themselves have always Benefit by them, as you have it in that known Place, *Ezek.* ix. They that mourned for the common Abominations were *marked*, and the common Desolation took not hold on them. This mourning for other Mens Wickedness, both testifies and preserves the godly Man's Innocence. I say, it preserves it, as well as testifies it; it keeps them from the Contagion of that bad Air they live in; for without this, Sin would soon grow familiar. It is good for Men to keep up, and maintain in their Souls a Dislike of Sin; for when once it ceaseth to be displeasing to a Man, it will, e're long, begin to be pleasing to him.

3. If we consider the Nature of the Godly, we shall see this Mourning suit with it exceedingly, both in regard of his Relation to God, and to Man. God is his Father, and therefore it cannot but grieve him much to see him offended and dishonoured. Love to God, and consequently to his Law, and Love to Men, and Desire of their Good, is the Spring of these

Rivers. A godly Man is tender of God's Glory and of his Law; every Stroke that it receives, striketh his Heart: And he hath Bowels of Compassion to Men, and would be glad if they were converted and saved. He considers every Man as his Brother, and therefore is sorrowful to see him run the Hazard of perishing in Sin. The former Sympathy, whereby the godly Man tenders the Glory of God, is from his Piety: This latter, whereby he pities the Misery of Man, is from his Charity; and from these flow the *Rivers that run down his Eyes.*

To be too sensible of worldly Crosses, and prodigal of Tears upon such slight Occasions, is little better than childish or womanish; but these Tears, that flow from Love to God, and Grief for Sin, have neither Uncomeliness nor Excess in them. Abundance of them will beseem any Man that is a Christian. Let prophane Men judge it a Weakness to weep for Sin, yet we see *David* do it. Men of Arms and Valour need not fear Disparagement by weeping thus; it is the truest Magnanimity to be sensible of the point of God's Honour, which is injured by Sin.

Again, The Consideration of this Truth will discover the World guilty of very much Ingratitude to godly Men. It hath always been the Custom of profane Persons, to seek to brand Religion and Godliness with Disloyalty and Turbulency, and to make it pass for an Enemy to the Peace and Prosperity of States and Kingdoms. You see clearly with what Affection Religion furnishes Men towards the Publick, causing them to mourn for common Sins, and to prevent, as far as in them lies, common Calamities. And this is of no little Consequence; for only it is not foreign Power, so much as Sin at home, that ruins Kingdoms. All the Winds that blow without the Earth, be they never so violent, stir it not, only that which is within its own Bowels makes Earthquake. It was a grave Answer of *Epaminondas*, being asked what he was doing solitary and private in the Time of solemn Mirth and Feasting?

While my Countrymen (says he) are so peaceably feasting, I am thinking on the best Means to preserve that Peace to them, that it may continue. Which, a little altered, is applicable to the Godly. They are oftentimes mourning for the Sins, and praying for the Peace of the Places where they live; when, in the mean time, the greatest part are multiplying Sin, and so forfeiting their Peace.

[*Rivers of Waters*] “This is a mournful melancholy Life that these Precisians lead,” says the Worldling. Yes, truly, if there were no more in it than what he can perceive and judge of. But beside the full Joy laid up for them, and the Beginnings of it here, there is even in this Mourning an unknown Sweetness and Delight. The Philosopher says even of common Tears, that there is some Kind of Pleasure in them, as some Things please the Taste by their very Tartness. But of these Tears, they that know them, know it to be eminently true, that they are pleasant. But be this Exercise as sad as the Profane call it, yet why observe they not, that they themselves are much the Cause of it, as they may read here *Because they keep not God's Law?*

But to pass by divers Inferences that the Word afford, let us take notice of the Duty here practised, and how much we are all obliged to the present Practice of it. Who will deny that we have too much Matter and Occasions of it? Besides the Sorrow of *Sion*, and particularly the Blood-shedding and Distress of our Brethren, and our own Danger, what Corner of the Land, what Rank or Condition of People is there that abounds not in gross and hainous Violation of God's Law? *They keep not thy Law.* Magistrates and Judges turning Judgment into Gall and Wormwood: Ministers remiss in that great Care, the Care of Souls: People wallowing in Ungodliness and Uncleanness, Swearing, &c. The greater oppressing the less, and the less defrauding and wronging the greater. No sensible and notable Work of Conversion almost to be seen or heard of amongst us, the Lord absenting himself

himself from his Ordinances. O that he would dwell in his House, and fill it with a Cloud of his Glory.

What vile Uncleanness and Wantonness! What shameful Drunkenness and Excess! And some so far from mourning for others Guiltiness of this Sin, that they glory in making others guilty of it, and count it a Pastime to make others drunk. And this is a far greater Sin than Drunkenness itself; for these Men, while they make Beasts of their Companions, they make Devils of themselves, becoming Tempters and Provokers to Sin. If any such be here, either tremble at the Woe that the Prophet *Habakkuk*, Chap. ii. denounceth, or confess that you believe not the Scriptures: *Woe to him that gives his Neighbour Drink, and puts the Bottle to him to make him drunken. The Cup of the Lord's Right Hand shall be turned to thee; it is full of heavy Vengeance.* There is a Cup, if you like it, to pay you home the Cups you give to others.

Again: How is the Land filled with Oaths and Cursings? How are your Streets, and almost all Companies where a Man can come, defiled, partly with tearing the precious Name of God, partly with calling on the Devil. There would be no End of reckoning up all Particulars; Sabbath-breaking, Fraud and Covetousness, Pride and Malice, and Envyings one of another, and the rest. But the Sum is this, an universal Want of the Fear of God and his Law.

And the Cause of this is, in a great part, Ignorance of God and of his Law; and truly it is wonderful, under so much Light and such plentiful Preaching, to find so much Darkness, not only in the Skirts and remote Places, but even in the prime Parts of this Land. Multitudes that are Strangers to the very Principles and Fundamentals of that Religion which they profess; and they that have Knowledge, abusing it and sinning against it, continuing in Profaneness. And without this true Religion, it is as impossible to have renewed Hearts and Lives, as to

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have a House without a Foundation. or, as we say, a Castle in the Air. And this Atheism and Ignorance amongst People, is in a great Part to be imputed to the Corruption and Sloth of Ministers: And would to God there were not many Congregations, not only altogether destitute, but such as are freezing under a cold and lifeless Ministry!

You see then, we want not Causes of Mourning and Humiliation on all hands; but our Want is inward, of that due Disposition for it, *Softness of Heart*, and that *Love to God*, which should melt and mollify the Heart. Let us then stir up ourselves, and one another, to this godly Sorrow for the Sins of the Land. There is need of Rivers of Tears for these Heaps of Sin; as they tell of *Hercules* his letting in a River to that monstrous Stable of *Augeas*, that could not otherwise have been cleansed in the Time allotted him.

And truly, as the Duty lies upon all the Faithful, the Ministers of the Word ought to be most eminent in it, the chief Mourners, the Precentors, to take up the Tune of these Themes, *Joel. ii. 17*. And all that wish the Good of Church and Kingdom ought to bear a Part in them, according to their Measure. Have we not much need to intreat Reconcilement with God, that he prove not our Enemy? Yes, surely, and were we reconciled with him, we would have little need to fear the Power of Man.

Now they that would be profitable Mourners for others Sins, by all means, must have these two Conditions I mentioned; to be careful Observers of the Law themselves, and to mourn for their own failing and breaking of it. Now to the observing of the Law, it is absolutely needful to know and understand it, and that not only in the Letter and Superfice, but according to the spiritual Sense and Meaning of it: For without this Knowledge, a Man may light upon some Duty by Guess, as it were in the Dark; but observe the Law he cannot. They are not only reproveable that glory in their own Sins, and make Sport
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of the Sins of others, but they mistake it much, that think it enough to consider their own with Grief, and judge the Sins of others an Impertinency for them to think on. They mourn not right for others that begin not at themselves, so they mourn never aright for themselves that end in themselves. He that here thus weeps for others, made his Bed to swim with these Rivers for his own Sin, *Psal. vi. 6.* (2.) As a Man must know this Law, so he must be inwardly convinced and persuaded of the Divinity of it, that it is God's Law. (3.) He must have a deep Apprehension of the Majesty and Authority of the Lawgiver, to work Reverence, and of his Goodness to beget Love; and the due Mixture of these two will both strongly command and sweeten Obedience to his Commandments. And this Obedience, tho' it be not an absolute and perfect fulfilling of any one of the Commandments, yet it has a Respect to them all, as this *Psalms* hath it, which is (so to speak) an imperfect Kind of Perfection. And from this Respect to the Law, which is the observing of it, will flow that other Condition, of grieving when we break it.

And besides all other Things that should make a Christian's own Sin grievous to him, there is one Thing cannot but move him much, The Consideration of the Sorrow and Sufferings of Christ. To view the Bleedings of the Lord Jesus; cannot chuse but pierce a believing Soul, and make it say, "Did my Redeemer shed his Blood for my Sins, and shall not I myself shed Tears for them?" I know the natural Constitution of some denies them Tears; but if it do so to any, make up that Want with Sense of inward Grief, and it is well enough. The Eye of God can discern that as well as the other. But truly, where Men have Tears for lighter Causes, (for all other Causes are lighter) and none for this, they feel not yet the Weight of Sin, except that Want be through the Deepness of Sorrow, which sometimes will stop the Current of Tears, tho' it used to run at

other Times; as they say, *Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.* But this is a rare and happy Impediment.

And to answer another Doubt: If you find sometimes worldly Grievs stir you more violently, yet let this godly Sorrow affect you more constantly, that it may have the Advantage in Continuance, if it fall short in the Degree.

But as this Grief must begin at home, as they say of Charity, it must not be so selfish as to rest there. And truly, where it comes in that Order, it may be some way a stronger Evidence of Sincerity, to mourn for others Sins than for our own; for there seems to be more of God in it, because there is less in it of ourselves, and of our own particular Interest.

Now you will possibly think it but an unpleasant Duty that you have heard urged all this while; but look forward and consider the Issue of it. That which Christ speaks in particular to his Disciples, is generally true in all Christians, *Job xvi. 20. Ye shall weep and lament* (says he) *but the World shall rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your Sorrow shall be turned (or made) into Joy.* The Water of those Tears shall be turned into Wine of Consolation. The Traffick of these Rivers is gainful, they export Grief, and import Joy. When these Tears are called *Seed*, the Harvest-crop is called *Joy.* *They that sow in Tears shall reap in Joy.* They are here called *Rivers*, and they are answered with a River, *Psal. lxxxvi. 8.* for which they shall in end be perfectly exchanged. *Thou shalt make them drink of the River of thy Pleasures.* And *Rev. vii. 17.* *The Lamb shall feed them, and lead them unto living Fountains of Waters.* Here they run down the Eyes and water the Cheeks, and there you read that God shall wipe them away from their Eyes. Who would not be content to weep, to have God wipe away their Tears with his own Hand! Be ambitious then to be found amongst the Mourners in *Sion*; and when ye remove from this Valley of Tears, God shall at once fully wipe away all the Stain of Sin from your Souls, and

S E R M O N VIII.

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all Tears for it from your Eyes. And as he shall wipe away the Tears with the one Hand, he will set the Crown upon your Heads with the other.

S E R M O N VIII.

P R E F A C E.

BLESSED are they that dwell in thy House, saith the Psalmist, and he adds this Reason, *They will be still praising thee.* There is indeed always in God's House both fit Opportunity and plentiful Matter of his Praises. But the greatest Number of those that frequent his House, do not dwell in it, their Delight and Affection is not there. Therefore they cannot praise him, they come in as Strangers, and have no Skill of the Songs of Praise. Yea, and the very Children of the Family, that worship in Spirit and in Truth, find their Instruments (their Hearts) very often quite out of Tune for Praises, and sometimes most of all, when Praises are requisite. They find still such abundant Cause of Complaint in themselves, weighing down their Spirits, that they can hardly at all wind them up to magnify that God of our Mercy, which is far more abundant. If we would take a reflex View and look back upon our Carriage this Day in the Presence of our God, who is among us, that would not find much Work for sad Thoughts? Would not one find that he had a hard and stony Heart? another a light inconstant wandering Heart to complain of? A third an unbelieving Heart? And some all of these? And they (if such there be) that have both deeply sorrowed, and been largely comforted will possibly for all that, upon former sad Experience, be full of Fears and Jealousies,

that this sweet Temper will not be of long Continuance; that e're long the World or some Lust, will find, or make a Way to creep in, and banish those heavenly Thoughts, and trouble that Peace and Joy which accompanies them. Yet notwithstanding all these Causes of Grief or Fear, our Causes of Praise are both more and greater. And it is no Reason, that the Sense of our own Evil, should prejudge that Acknowledgment of God's Goodness, yea rather it should stir us up to extol it so much the more. Cease not to bemoan the Evils of your own Hearts; but withal forget not to magnify the Riches of his Grace, who hath given himself for you, and to you. The two will not hinder one another, but the due Intermixture of them will make a very good Harmony. And the Fruit of them will be this, you shall have still more Cause to praise and less to complain. When the Lord shall find you humble Acknowledgers of his Grace, he will delight to bestow more Grace upon you, and will subdue those Iniquities for you, which you cannot. And tho' he is pleased to do it but gradually by little and little, yet in the End the Conquest shall be full; and then he who is the Author and Finisher of your Faith, tho' it is his own Work, yet because it is done in you, he shall account the Victory yours, as obtained by you, and give you as Conquerors, the Crown of Glory, *To him that overcometh* (saith he) *will I give to sit with me in my Throne, &c.*

There is nothing here, but from free Grace. The Courage and Strength to fight in this spiritual Warfare, the Victory by fighting, and the Crown by Victory, flow all from that Fountain. *In all these Things we are more than Conquerors* (saith the Apostle) *but how? through him that loved us.* Therefore if we desire to be such, let us humble ourselves before the Throne of Grace, intreating both for Grace and Glory in the Name of Christ our Mediator,

CANT. I. 3.

Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth, therefore do the Virgins love thee.

THE natural Workings and Desires of Things are agreeable to their Being. The Beasts according to their sensitive Life seek those things that tend to the Good and Preservation of that Life, and affect nothing higher than those, and they are satisfied. Man, (except such as are in the lowest Stage and border upon the Beasts) finds Nature, even corrupt Nature, raising him to higher Desires and Designs. And yet of the best of them, the Apostle's Maxim holds true, *They that are after the Flesh mind the things of the Flesh*, and yet he subjoins the Excellency of some Men beyond the best Naturalist, *They that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit*. Rom. viii. 5. They must be confined to things natural, but are strongly moved towards spiritual Blessings, and Christ the Sum of them. And having once tasted of his Sweetness can say, *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments, &c.* They that are elevated to a supernatural Being, can admit nothing into Competition with his Love, and this it is that lies under these Words, *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments, &c.*

Numbers have promiscuously been his Guests at this Time, and the greatest Number think they came to good Purpose. But know that you are so far from partaking of Christ in the Sacrament, that you have not so much as smelt his Perfumes, if you be not strongly taken with his Love. Great are the Praises, and many the Duties you owe him for so rich Favours; and therefore shew your good Will, and endeavour some Payment. But know that none of them are current, except they be stamped with *Love*. If you love not, you do nothing; all your Labours and services without it, are as so many Cyphers, they

amount to just nothing. And with it, the meanest of them will find Acceptance.

You have briefly in the Words, *Christ's Loveliness*, and *the Christian's Love*; the former the Cause of the latter, both couched under borrowed Terms, according to the whole Strain of this allegorical Song, to which the true experimental Knowledge of this Divine Love is the best Commentary.

In all Love, three Things are necessary. (1.) Some Goodness in the Object, either true and real; or apparent and seeming to be so; for the Soul, be it never so evil, can affect nothing but what it takes some Way to be good. (2.) There must be a Knowledge of that Goodness; for the most excellent Things, if altogether unknown, affect not. (3.) There must be a Suitableness or Agreement of that good Thing with the Nature of those which should affect it; otherwise indeed how good soever it is, it is not good to them.

Now all these we have clearly in this Love. (1.) The Goodness, the Excellency of Christ express'd by *precious Ointments*. (2.) The Manifestation and making of it known, signified by *the pouring forth of his Name*. (3.) His Fitness and Congruity with them here mentioned under this Denomination *Virgins*; such as have the Senses of their Souls, not stop't with the Pollutions of the World, but pure and active, and therefore (as the Apostle speaks, *Heb. v. 14.*) *exercised to discern Good and Evil*. These three Requisites thus happily met, must needs produce Love, *Therefore the Virgins love thee*.

Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments.] How true is the Apostle's Word, when he calls Christ the Believers *All things*! And that radical Grace of Faith, because it apprehends Christ, hath a Kind of Universality; and it is reasonable too, it alone being to the Soul, what all the five Senses are to the Body. It is the Eye and the Mouth, a wonderful Eye: *It sees him that is invisible*, *Heb. xi. 27.* The Mouth, *it tastes that the Lord is gracious*, *1 Pet. ii. 3.* Ye

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take these two both together in one Place, *Psal.* xxxiv. 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* It is the Soul's Ear, for what else is meant, when it is said, *He that hath an Ear to hear, let him hear;* and was it not that *Touch* which Christ took special Notice of, and with good Reason distinguished it from the common Touch of the Multitude that was crowding about him; that *Touch* alone draws Virtue from him, *Some hath touched me, for there is a Virtue gone out of me.* And lastly, as it is all those other Senses, and Christ its Object in Reference to them all, so here in its *Smelling*, it finds the Savour of his fragrant Graces and by that works Love; *Because of the Savour, &c.*

What strange odds is there betwixt the Opinion of Christ's Spouse and the World that knows him not? They wonder what she sees in him desirable; she wonders that they are not all ravished with his Excellencies. They prefer the basest Vanities in the World before him; she finds the choicest and richest things in the World too mean to resemble the smallest Part of his Worth. See in this *Song* how busily and skilfully she goes to all the Creatures, and crops the rarest Pieces in Nature and Art to set forth her Well-beloved, and seems to find them all too poor for her Purpose. One while she extols him above all things beautiful, and pleasant to the Eye; another while above things delectable to the Taste, 'as in the former Verse, *Thy Loves are better than Wine,* and here prefers the Perfume of his Graces to the most precious Ointments.

When a natural Eye looks upon the Sacrament, to wit, of the Lord's Supper, it finds it a bare and mean kind of Ceremony. Take heed there be not many that come to it, and partake of it with others that prize it little, have but low Conceits of it, and do indeed find as little in it, as they look for. But oh! what precious Consolation and Grace doth a Believer meet with at this Banquet? How richly is the Table furnished to his Eye; what plentiful Varieties employ his Hand and Taste? what Abundance of
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rare Dainties? Yet there is nothing but one here, but that one is all things to the believing Soul, it finds his Love is sweeter than the richest Wine to the Taste, or best Odours to the Smell; and that delightful Word of his, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, is the only Musick to a distressed Conscience.

[*Thy good Ointments.*] The holy Ointment of the Sanctuary under the Law was composed according to God's own Prescription, *Exod. xxx. 25*. And they were straitly forbid to imitate it, or make any like it, to signify the singular Holiness, the matchless Worth of the anointing *Oil of Gladness*, wherewith our High Priest, the Lord Jesus, was *anointed above his Fellows*. And in this he is incomparable, that his Ointment he hath not from without. It was his own Divine Nature that perfumed his Manhood with these precious Ointments. God and the Spirit of the Lord, is said to have anointed him, *Psal. xlv. 7*. *Thou lovest Righteousness and hatest Wickedness: Therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy Fellows*; and *Isa. lxi. 1*. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings unto the Meek, &c.* But know that that Spirit, and the Father are one in Essence with the eternal Son. In that mystical Song much like to this, in the *xlv. Psalm* at the 8th Ver. It is said *his Garments smell of Myrrh and Aloes, and Cassia, as he comes forth of his Ivory Palaces*. When he came down from his glorious Court above to dwell among Men, he apparelled himself like them; he was clothed with human Flesh. But yet that Vesture was so transcendently enriched with all Graces as with costly Perfumes, that Men might easily know there was more under them than a mere Man. Yea even in that low Estate did such Beams of his Glory shine through, that all whose Eyes were open, did clearly behold them, and knew him to be no less than the only begotten Son of God, by this, that *he was so full of Grace and Truth*, *Joh. i. 14*. And these are,

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in a Word, these precious Ointments, whose delightful Smell is here commended.

Now to enumerate and describe these Graces, what Tongue of Men, yea or of Angels were sufficient? What other is the main Subject of the whole Scriptures? what mean all the Figures and Ceremonies of the Law; the costly Furniture and Ornaments of the Temple; the rich Vestments of the High Priest; that fine Linen, that Silk and Gold, these Gems and precious Stones? was any of them, were they all any other but Shadows and dim Resemblances of the matchless Perfections of Jesus Christ? It is strange that Christians have so low Conceits of their High Redeemer! What is the Gospel, but a more clear and plentiful pouring forth of those Ointments? What was the great Labour and Business of the holy Apostles, but the diffusing of Christ's Graces through the World? *I determined to know nothing among you save Christ and him crucified*, says St. Paul to his Corinthians. What was that other Sacrament and this, but Coverts under which Christ conveys himself and his Graces to the believing Soul, while the profane and slight hearted Receivers are sent away with empty Elements? Thus you see how ample a Subject these Graces are in the general. And truly the Consideration of any one Particular of them might be the Employment of many Hours. Would you hear the Wisdom of Christ? look what the Apostle says of it, Col. ii. 3. *In him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*. Not some Drops of Wisdom, no, nor Streams, but a Fountain; a Treasure, not one Treasure, but Treasures; many, yea, all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; yet not obvious to every Eye, but, as Treasures, are hid. The Children of Wisdom, which are the World's Fools, have some Knowledge of this his Wisdom, and draw from it for their own Use; but to sound the Depth of it, who can be able?

No less admirable is his *Holiness*, he is both the immaculate Lamb, and the undefiled Sacrifice, *such a High*

High Priest became us : Became us ! Yes, *holy, harmless and undefiled*, Heb. vii. 26. The more we were defiled with Sin, the more stood we in need of an undefiled and spotless High Priest. It was as expedient, that he should be unlike us in that, as that he should be like us in all other things. Therefore, as for the legal Priesthood there was a holy consecrating Oil, this immortal High Priest was anointed with most entire and compleat Holiness ; and this perfect Holiness of his, is set forth as *Myrrh*, the best Ointments and Spices, *Myrrh* which is of a Virtue preservative from Corruption. He was not only of excellent Smell, while he lived among Men, but this Myrrh did likewise preserve and exempt him from contracting any Corruption or Pollution, by the bad Air of sinful Company ; so that he conversed with Sinners, that he might convert them without any Danger of Infection.

And as he was thus extraordinarily anointed with the Spirit of Wisdom and Holiness, so likewise with the Spirit of *Meekness*, therefore called *The Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World* : His Voice was not heard in the Streets. And take in that other Grace, which he himself mentions, together with his Meekness, as being near in Nature to it, *Humility* ; *learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart*, Matth. xi. 29. Indeed, Humility is an odoriferous Grace, it is a gracing decoring Grace, and it adds a kind of Sweetness and Lustre to all other Graces ; yea, it serves singularly as a Character for the Trial of the Truth of all other Graces. As * *Balsam* which is the chief of precious Ointments, used to be tried, that is the truest and best, that put into any Liquor, goes to the Bottom, that but slight, which swims above ; so these Graces are most upright, that are accompanied with most Humility. And that this may be out of doubt, you know that Jesus Christ (of whom we now speak) as he had most Grace, so was he most exemplary in Humility. And certainly, the sweet Smell

* *To Baal Shemin.*

of this good Ointment, did fill the whole House, when he washed his Disciples Feet, *Job. xiii.* as is said of the Ointment that *Mary* poured upon his Feet, in the foregoing Chapter, *Job. xii.*

Amongst many other of his gracious Qualities that might be mentioned, there is one we cannot but take particular notice of, his *Love*; the rather, because the fragrant Smell of his Graces is here said to beget Love. Now you know that one of the strongest Attractives of Love, is Love, *Magnes amoris amor*, *ὡς ἑωτα τίχτει*. What made him empty himself of his Glory, as the Apostle speaks, but because he was full of Love? What made him take on the Form of a Servant, suffer Heat and Cold, and Hunger, and Poverty, but Love? What other was it made him digest the Persecutions, Revilings, and the Contradiction of Sinners, but Love? But the great Wonder of his Love is this, he died to become our Life; *who hath loved me, and given himself for me*, says the great Apostle St. Paul. And hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us, says the beloved Apostle St. John. Was it the Nails that held him fast to the Cross, when they tauntingly bid him come down? No, it was his Love, that was stronger than Death. But all this was nothing to the angry Countenance of his Father, nor would he ever have ventured upon that, if infinite Love had not persuaded him. No wonder if the Apostle call it a Love that passeth Knowledge, *That you may know*, saith he, *the Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge*, Eph. iii. 19. Know it we may, and should, but we must know withal, that we cannot know it fully. And this is our Comfort, that it is greater than we can comprehend, for if it were not so, it would be less than we stand in need of. So much of his Love we may understand, as may abundantly inflame our Hearts with Love to him; for this Purpose hath he revealed it, and made his Name like an Ointment poured out. And that is the second Thing.

His Name.] That is, the Report and Manifestation of his Excellencies. And if you will take it properly of his Name *Jesus*, and *Christ* or the *Messiah*, it is true of them, for they are significative of their Excellencies. Ask an afflicted Conscience, if *Jesus*, that is, a *Saviour*, be not a precious Word, that hath a sovereign Value, both a refreshing Smell, and a healing Virtue. The Hammer of the Law may break a stony Heart in Pieces, but it is only the Blood of *Jesus* that can soften it. And where it is effectually poured, either upon a wounded Soul, it heals it, or upon a hard heart, it mollifies it. For that other Name, *Christ*, well may it be called an *Ointment poured out*, for it signifies his *anointing*. And that the sweet Savour of this Name may affect, read but that one Passage, *Isa. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings, &c.* What inestimable Riches of Consolation is there in each of these Effects, to which *Christ* was anointed, and yet we find not a Word among them all for a proud stiff-necked Sinner. Here are *good Tidings*, but it is to the meek; *comfortable binding up*, but it is for the *broken hearted*; *Liberty*, but it is for *Captives* and *Prisoners*, groaning under their Chains, and desirous to be delivered; not for such as delight in their Bondage. There is *Oil of Joy*, and *Garments of Praise*, but they are provided for *mourning dejected Spirits* that need them; not for the impenitent. On the contrary, there is a terrible Word interjected in the midst of these Promises, *The Day of Vengeance of our God*; and that is the Portion of *Christ's Enemies*, and such are all incorrigible Sinners.

Thus it is, at the same Banquet from which you come, one may be filled with spiritual Joy, and the very Person that sits next, be filled with a second Curse, and return more miserable than he came. But let the disconsolate lamenting Sinner lift up his head and behold *Christ*, the Son of God, anointed a Prophet

bet to preach Salvation and Liberty to such, a *Priest* to purchase it, and a *King* to give it.

Now the *pouring out* of this Name is divers. Before the coming of the Messiah his Name was poured out in Prophecies and Promises, in Types and legal ceremonies, but more fully when the *Word was made flesh*. Then Angels, and holy Men, yea and Women, spake clearly of him. What was his Father's voice at his Baptism? The Holy Ghost's descending? What was his own Preaching and Miracles, and Conversation, but all the pouring forth of his precious Name? And in his Sufferings and Death, what think you? Was not his Name then poured forth, yea, his blood with it? Yes, truly, being extended on the cross, and his Body pierced in divers Places; his precious Ointments were shed abroad towards all the quarters of the World. Their Smell both reached Heaven and the visible Earth. God the Father (as he was said to do in *Noah's* Sacrifice) did much more smell in his Sacrifice, a Savour of Rest, appeasing his Wrath; and all Believers a Savour of Peace, a quieting of their Consciences. And as aromattick Spices, when they are pounded out and beaten, send forth their sweet Smells most liberally, so in these his Sufferings, did the *Obedience*, *Patience* and *Love*, and all the *Graces*, and the *Name* of our Saviour, most clearly manifest themselves to the World. After he was dead they embalmed his body, but they knew not that his own Virtue would do more than all the Ointments and Spices in the World could do, not only by preserving his Body from Corruption, but by raising it the third Day. And truly, after his Resurrection, his own Disciples knew his Name better than ever before, and yet more fully after his *Ascension*, when the Holy Ghost came down upon them, which was poured from Heaven on them; for this very End, that they might pour forth Christ's Name to the Ends of the Earth, *Acts* ii. 8. And they did so, carrying his precious Treasure in earthen Vessels, as that elect Vessel *St. Paul* speaks. And ever since, God hath

continued

continued the pouring forth of this Name, by the Ministry and Preaching of the Gospel. It is true, there are too many of those that are employed in this Work, that seek themselves and their own Ends, rather than his Glory whom they preach. And they that are more upright, the very best of them are sinful Men. But how mean and unworthy soever they be, despise not the Gospel. Let the sweet Name, which they pour forth, prevail for itself, that so you may reverence and love it, if you would have *Salvation* by it; and *there is no other Name under Heaven*, by which *that* can be obtained.

As this Name is poured forth in the *Gospel preached*, so in the *Sacraments* annexed to it; and particularly in this, when the Bread is broken, and the Wine poured out. And was not this the earnest Desire of the Receivers of it this Day? It should have been to have our Share in it, for the Refreshment and Curing of our Souls. Nor shall any that came thus be disappointed. And if not presently, yet most certainly, and that in due time they shall find the sweet Fruits of it.

You have heard many ways how the Name of Christ is poured out, yet there is one more, without which all the rest are ineffectual: It is this, the secret and powerful *working of the Spirit of God* in the Soul. The Ordinances and Means of Salvation do indeed pour forth the Name of Christ round about a Man, but till the Spirit concur with them, not one Drop falls within the Soul. And is he not so much the more miserable, that hears much of Christ, and partakes nothing of him? Yes, surely, a Man may have much common Knowledge of Christ, and may understand well, yea, may preach well concerning his Worth and Graces, and yet not *love him*. But there is a particular Knowledge of him by the Infusion of the Spirit, and where the smallest Measure of this is, presently wins the Affection. There is a *shedding abroad of the Love of God in our Hearts*, that the Apostle speaks of, *Rom. v. 5.* and this draws us after him

For our Love to God is nothing else but the Reflexion of his Love to us. So then, though many hear of Christ, yet because there are but few that have this special Knowledge of him, therefore it is, that so few do truly esteem of him and love him; and they are such as are here called Virgins: And that is the third Thing.

The Virgins.] Similitude and Conformity of Natures begets Friendship; pure Affections delight in a pure Object, and makes them such. For the Truth is, Christ doth not find Men naturally suitable to himself, but as he took on our Nature, so he washeth away the Sins of our Nature, which he took not on, and makes us that way conformable to his Nature. And they that are so changed, though they were formerly Lovers of Sin, yet by Conversion, which is called Regeneration, they are born again, and so become not only chaste, but even Virgins, spiritually: For by Virgins here, are not meant such as *Romish* Votaries fancy them to be, no, this Virginity may well consist with any lawful State of Life.

These Virgins are such as be truly holy, and pure in Heart and Life, who though they are not perfectly free from all Sin, yet have they Affection to no Sin. These are singularly delighted with the Smell of Christ's Name and Graces, while the voluptuous Person, and the Profane Worldling, dislikes and despises it*. The Virgins, they bestow their Affection whole and entire upon Christ.

How grossly do you delude yourselves, that make your Hearts Dens of Pride, filthy Lust, Malice, and Envy, and thousands of Vanities, and yet think to find a Corner in them to lodge Christ too? Truly, you would both straiten him in Room, and give him very bad Neighbours. No, they that think not a whole Heart too little for him, shall never enjoy him.

The Virgins love thee.] Grace destroys not the natural Passions of the Soul, but corrects them only, by destroying their Corruption, and so they become not

* *Balsama sic suis, sic male nardus alit.*

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only

only not contrary to Grace, but are made the Subject and Seat of Grace. This of Love, which is the chief of them, we see it abolisheth not, but rectifies it, recalling it to its due Object, and turning it into the right Channel by which it may empty itself into the Ocean of Goodness.

And this Love may well consist with the Purity of Virgins; yea, it is this Love that purifies and makes them such. *The Virgins love, but whom? Thee.* And it is as reasonable a Love as it is pure; *therefore they love thee*, because thou hast made them, in some measure, apprehensive of thy Worth, which commands the Love of all that know it; not a cold and indifferent Affection, but a superlative ardent Love, far overtopping all their other Desires. And good Reason, since Christ doth infinitely, and beyond all Comparison, surpass all other Things desirable. Ask your own Hearts, if you love Christ thus; for if not thus you love him not at all. The Apostle St. Paul's Love was of this Size, *Phil. iii. 7, 8. But what Things were Gain to me, those I counted Loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the Loss of all Things, and I count them but Dung that I may win Christ.* The Love will not only undergo Difficulties and Sufferings for Christ, without either repining or fainting; but it will even be glad to meet with them, as Opportunity is, to exercise and testify itself. Hard Things will seem most easy for his sake, and bitter Things exceeding sweet. In a word, to him that loves, scarcely anything is impossible. Love is the leading Passion of the Soul, all the rest conform themselves to it, *Desire, Hope, and Fear, Joy and Sorrow.* If then you love Christ, the Desires and Breathings of your Soul after him are strong and earnest, if he withdraw himself, or appear angry. If either you see him not, or see him look discontented, your Grief will be so deep that it cannot be allayed by any worldly Employments; yet upon some former Tokens of his Love

which is known to be unchangeable, Hope will uphold the Soul, till the Beams of his Grace scatter the Cloud, and break through. Tho' our *Joseph* seem strange, and speak roughly for a while, he cannot long refrain di covering his Affection. Again, love you him, unspeakable will be your Joy when he smiles upon you. As great will be your Delight in Possession as your Desire is in Pursuit; and while you have his Presence, it will be too hard a Task for any Affliction to dismay you. Have you indeed heard Christ speak comfortably to you this Day at his holy Table? How will this enable the Soul, and arm it against Dangers, and distracting distrustful Fears? *Perfect Love casteth out Fear*, saith St. *John*, that is, all base and servile Fear: But there is one Fear that is in no Heart but where Love begets it, *Fear to offend*. You know how wary and loth Men are naturally to displease those they love; therefore it is, that Love to Christ, and a careful observing of his Commandments, are inseparable Companions: Yea, Love itself is the *fulfilling of the Law*, for it gives up the Heart to God, and consequently the whole Man. Then there is no Return of Duty which your receiving of Christ calls for, (and what doth it not call for?) there is none, I say, but is comprised under this one of *Love*. Do you owe him Praises? Yes, surely; then *love him*, that will stir you up to praise him. You never knew, but where much Love was in the Heart, it made the Tongue ready and active upon all Occasions to praise the Party loved. Love will entertain small Courtesies with great Thanks, much more where the Benefit so far exceeds all possible Thankfulness. Ought you to serve and obey him? Doubtless he hath for that Purpose redeemed you with his precious Blood. And truly there is no Obedience nor Service, so full and so chearful, as that which flows from Love. Should you study Conformity to Christ, and labour to be like him? Yes, for this is to walk worthy of Christ; then there is nothing assimilates so much as Love. Men delight in their Society whom they love,

and by their Society they do insensibly contract their Customs, and become like them. These Virgins that love Christ for his Graces, they love to converse with him, and by conversing with him, they receive of his Graces, and have a Smell of his Perfumes. Not only do they by the Smell of his Garments, or such imposed Rites obtain the Blessing, but likewise smell like him by the Participation of sanctifying Grace, of his Wisdom and Holiness, in a pure and godly Conversation, (abstaining from the impure Lusts and Pollutions of the World) of his Meekness and Humility. Never think that one and the same Soul can have much Pride and much of Christ; ever the more Grace a Man hath, the more Sense hath he likewise of his own Unworthiness, and God's free Mercy, and consequently the more Humility. If you love Christ, you cannot chuse but be like him in Love to your Brethren. This is expressly compared by the Psalmist to the precious Ointment poured upon Aaron's Head, that ran down to the very Skirts of his Garments. Our Head, and High Priest, the Lord Jesus, hath incomparably testified his Love to Believers, whom he is pleased to call his *Brethren*; they are far from equalling him, either in Love to him, or one to another, but they do imitate him in both. This is his great Commandment, *that we love one another, even as he loved us*, which is express both as a strange Motive and a high Example. 'Tis not possible that a Spirit of Malice and implacable Hatred can consist with the Love of Christ. Finally, Should you be ready to suffer for Christ? Yes: Then Love is that which will enable you; and if you were inflamed with this Fire, tho' burned for him, that Fire would only consume your Dross, and be soon extinguished, but this would endure for ever.

By these and the like Evidences, try whether you indeed love the Lord Jesus Christ. And by the Fruits, you that profess to love him, testify the Sincerity of your Love; and be assured, that if you are now found amongst these Virgins that Love him, you

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shall one Day be of the Number of those Virgins that are spoken of, *Rev. xiv. 3, 4.* that sing a new Song before the Throne of God.

If you hate the Defilements of the World, and be not polluted with inordinate Affection to the Creature, it shall never repent you to have made choice of Christ, he shall fill your Hearts with Peace and Joy in believing. When you come to his House and Table, he shall send you home with Joy and sweet Consolation, such as you would not exchange with Crowns and Scepters. And after some few of these running Banquets here below, you shall enter into the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where Faith shall end in Sight, and Hope in Possession, and Love continue in perpetual and full Enjoyment, where you shall be never weary, but for ever happy, in beholding the Face of the blessed Trinity, to whom be Glory. *Amen.*

S E R M O N IX.

P R E F A C E.

HOW true is that Word of our Saviour, who is Truth itself, *Without me ye can do nothing,* severed from me, as that Branch that is not in me. They that are altogether out of Christ, in spiritual Exercises do nothing at all. 'Tis true, they may pray and hear the Word, yea, and preach it too, and yet in so doing they do nothing, nothing in effect. They have the Matter of good Actions, but it is the internal Form gives Being to Things. They are but a Number of empty Words, and a dead Service to a living God. For all our outward Performances and Worship of the Body is nothing but the Body of Worship, and therefore nothing but a

Carcase, except the Lord Jesus, by his Spirit, breathe upon it the Breath of Life. Yea, the Worshipper himself is spiritually dead, till he receive Life from Jesus, and be quickned by his Spirit. If this be true, then it will follow necessarily, that where Numbers are met together, (as here) pretending to serve and worship God, yet he hath very few that do so indeed, the greatest Part being out of Christ; and such being without him, they can do nothing in his Service.

ROMANS VIII. 7.

Because the carnal Mind is Enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.

THE ordinary Workings and Actions of Creatures are suitable to their Nature, as the ascending of light Things, and the moving of heavy Things downwards; so the vital and sensitive Actions of Things that have Life and Sense. The reasonable Creature, 'tis true, hath more Liberty in its Actions, freely chusing one Thing, and rejecting another; yet it cannot be denied, that in acting of that Liberty, their Choice and Refusal follow the Sway of their Nature and Condition. As the Angels and glorified Souls, (their Nature being perfectly holy, and unalterably such, they cannot sin, they can delight in nothing but in obeying and praising that God, in the Enjoyment of whom their Happiness consisteth; still ravished in beholding his Face. The Saints again that have not yet reached that Home, and are but on their Journey, they are not fully defecated and refined from the Dross of Sin: There are in them two Parties, *Natural Corruption*, and *Supernatural Grace*, and these keep a struggling within them; but the younger shall supplant the elder. Grace shall in the End overcome, and in the mean while, tho' it be not free from Mixture, yet it is predominant. The main Bent of a renewed Man is Obedience and Holiness, and

and any Action of that kind he rejoices in, but the Sin that escapes him, he cannot look upon but with Regret and Discontent. But alas! they that be so minded are very thin sown in the World, even in God's peculiar Fields, where the Labourage of the Gospel is, and the outward Profession of true Religion unanimously received. Yet the Number of true Converts, spiritual-minded Persons, is very small, the greatest Part acting Sin with Delight, and taking Pleasure in Unrighteousness, living in Disobedience to God, as in their proper Element; and the Reason is, the Contrariety of their Nature to our holy Lord.

The carnal Mind is Enmity against God.

The Mind φρόνημα.] Some render it the *Prudence* or *Wisdom* of the *Flesh*. Here you have it, the *carnal Mind*, but the Word signifies, indeed, an Act of the Mind, rather than either the Faculty itself, or the Habit of Prudence in it, so as it discovers what is the Frame of both those. The *mind*ing, as it is used, *Ver.* 5. conform to that of *Moses*, Gen. vi. *Every Imagination of the Thoughts of Man's Heart is only evil continually.* The Word indeed signifies the *wise Thoughts*. So then take the full Latitude of it thus: "*The carnal Mind*, in its best and wisest Thoughts, is directly *Enmity against God.*"

Carnal, τῆς σαρκὸς.] What is meant by the *Flesh* here? It is the whole *corrupt Nature* of Man; and that we may know by its Opposition to the *Spirit*, not to the Spirit or Soul of a Man, for so it hath no *Thoughts* nor *Minding*, these being proper to the Soul, but opposed to the Spirit of God.

Now the Corruption of Nature is called the *Flesh*, not without very good Reason, not only to signify the Baseness of it, the *Flesh* being the more ignoble and meaner Part of a Man, but because the greatest Part of the Sins of Mens Lives are about sensitive Objects, and Things that concern the *Flesh* or the *Body*. It lets in Temptation of Sin to the Soul by the Doors of the Senses, and it gives the last Perfection or Accomplishment to Sin, by external acting of it. The very

first Sin that brought in Death and Misery with it upon Mankind, the Pleasure of the Eye and of the Taste, were Sharers in the Guiltiness of it.

The carnal Mind. Man in regard of his Composition is, as it were, the Tie and Band of Heaven and Earth, they meet and are married in him. A Body he has taken out of the Dust, but a Soul breathed from Heaven, from the Father of Spirits; a House of Clay, but a Guest of most noble Extraction. But the Pity is, it hath forgot its Original, and is so drowned in Flesh, that it deserves no other but to go under the Name of Flesh. It is become the Slave and Drudge of the Body, and, as the *Israelites* in Egypt, made perpetually to moyl in Clay. What is all your Merchandise, your Trades and Manufactures, your Tillage and Husbandry, but all for the Body, in its Behalf, for food and Raiment? In all these, the Mind must be careful and thoughtful, and yet properly they reach it not, for itself hath no Interest in them. It is true, the Necessity of the Body requires much of these Things, and superfluous Custom far more; but it is lamentable that Men force their Souls to forget itself, and its proper Business, to attend these Things only, and be busy in them. They spend all their Time and their choicest Pains upon perishing Things, and which is worse, engage their Affections to them. They *mind earthly things, whose End is Destruction*, Philip. iii. 19. The same Word that is here, *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς*, &c.

Will you consider seriously, that your Souls run the Hazard of perishing, because you consider not their spiritual Nature? When that earthly Tabernacle of yours shall fall to the Ground (and e're long it must) your Souls must then enter Eternity, and tho' you had as large a Share of earthly things as your earthly Hearts now would wish, they all lose their Use in that Moment. They are not a proper Good for the Soul at any Time, and least at that Time. If you keep it all your Life long, busy about the Interest and Benefit of the Flesh, the Body, how poor will it be

when they part, having provided nothing at all for itself, but the Guiltiness of a sinful Life, which will sink it into that bottomless Pit? Be forewarned then; *for to be carnally minded is Death, Ver. 6.* preceeding the Text.

The carnal Mind. Now as Sin hath abased and degenerated the Soul of Man, making it carnal, so the Son of God, by taking on our Nature, hath sublimated it again, and made it spiritual. The Souls that received him are spiritualized, yea, as Sin made the Soul carnal, Grace makes the very Body to become spiritual, making it partaker and co-worker in spiritual Things, together with the Soul, in doing and suffering, and participant of the Hopes too of an everlasting Reward. This is the main Christian Character our Apostle gives here, that they are spiritually minded, and that their Actions suit their Minds, *They walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* Whereas before, with the rest of the World, they were eager in the Pursuit of Honours, and Profits, and worldly Pleasures; the now Stream of their Desires run in another Channel, they seek after Honour, and are very ambitious of it; but it is such Honour as the Apostle speaks of in this Epistle, *Rom. ii. 7. By patient Continuance in well doing they seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality:* Their Mind is upon Profit and Gain, but it is with the same Apostle, *Philip. iii.* that they *may win Christ*, and they account all other things Loss in comparison: And their Desires are after Pleasure too, but not *carnal Pleasures*, those are both base and of short Continuance, but the Pleasures they aim at, are those that are *at God's right Hand, and for evermore*, *Psal. xvi. 11.* And that Path of Life he here speaks of, that Way of Holiness that leads thither, is their Delight. Spiritual Exercises they go to, not as their Task only, but more as their Joy and Refreshment. And this Change the Spirit of God works in the Soul, making it (yea, and the Body wherein it dwells) of carnal, to become spiritual, as the Fire to which the Holy Ghost is compared, refines Sand

Sand and Ashes, and makes of them the purest Glass, which is so neat and transparent.

Enmity against God.] Sin hath not only made us unlike God, by defacing his beautiful Image in us, not only Strangers by making us wander far off from him, but *Enemies*; nor Enemies only, but *Enmity* in the Abstract; for that is emphatical, *The carnal Mind is Enmity*, nothing else but Enmity.

Now this Enmity is described in the latter Clause of the Text, by an Antipathy, so to call it, or not Compliance with the Law of God; *it is not subject to the Law of God, neither can it be*, to wit, while it remains such. There is an absolute Impossibility in it, to suit with the Law of God, and consequently with God himself. The Reason lies in their opposite Qualities, God is *spiritual* and *holy*, and so is the Law, as our Apostle hath it in the preceeding Chapter; and the Opposition he there makes, betwixt his unregenerate Part and the Law, is wholly true of the unregenerate Man. The *Law is holy*, says he, *Ver. 12.* and *Ver. 14.* *it is spiritual*; to which too he opposes, *but I am carnal, sold under Sin.*

Where are now those that so vilify Grace and magnify Nature? Or, shall I rather say, nullify Grace and deify Nature? Here is the best Elogy the Apostle will bestow upon the best of Natures, *Enmity against God.* Nay, all the Sparkles of Virtue and more Good in civil Men, and ancient Heathens, is no better; besides many other things, to be said to the Virtues of those Philosophers, as Ignorance of Christ by whom alone this Enmity is removed.

I should easily confess, nor (I think) can any deny it, but that there is in the very Ruins of our Nature some Character left of a Tendency to God, as our chief and only satisfying Good, which we may call a kind of Love, and when we hear him spoken of, it flutter and stir; and hence Men so abhor the Imputation of hating God, and being Enemies. Yet this is so smothered under Sensuality and Flesh, that until we be made spiritual, nothing appears, but practical, and, as they call it, interpretative Enmity.

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There is one thing stains them enough, they were all, as that Father speaks, *animalia gloriæ*, they aimed not in their Study of Virtue at God's Glory, but at their own; and is not that Quarrel enough, and matter of Enmity? Says not he, *My Glory I will not give unto another?*

But that is most useful for you, to convince you of that too good Conceit Men have of their natural Condition. You would take it hardly, the most profane of you all, if any should come to you in particular, and tell you, you are an Enemy to God; but answer, there is none of you, if you believe the scriptures, but will confess that all Men are naturally such; and therefore, except we find in ourselves a notable Alteration from the Condition of Nature, we must take with it, that we are Enemies, yea, Enmity to God: Of Strangers, to become acquainted with him, yea, which is more, of Enemies to become Friends, is a greater and more remarkable Change, than to be incident to a Man, without any Evidence and Sign of it. I know there is very great Variety in the Way and Manner of Conversion; and to some, especially if it be in their tender Years, Grace may be instilled and dropt in, as it were, insensibly. But this I may confidently say, that whatsoever be the Way of working it, there will be a wide and apparent Difference betwixt Friendship with God, and the Condition of Nature, which is Enmity against him. Do not flatter yourselves, so long as your Minds remain carnal, ardent in Love to the World, and cold in Love to God, *Lovers of Pleasures more than of God*, as the Apostle speaks) you are his Enemies, for with him there is no *Neutrality*. That which they say, taxing it as a Weakness in the Sex, *Aut amat, aut odit, nihil est tertium*, is in this Case necessarily true of all. And this is God's Peculiar, that he can judge infallibly of the Inside. Those Shadows of Friendship Men use one with another, will not pass with him. Deceived he cannot be, but Men may easily, and

and alas! too many do deceive themselves in the Matter to their own Ruin.

We may learn hence, how deep Sin goes in our Nature, and consequently, that the Cure and Remedy of it must go as deep; that all the Parts of our Bodies, and Powers of our Souls are polluted originally, our very *Mind* and *Conscience*, as the Apostle speaks, for it is immersed in *Flesh*, and enslaved to *Flesh* naturally; and therefore goes under its Name, we are become all *Flesh*; that is the Spring of our Mischief; we have lost our Likeness with our Father, the Father of Spirits, the purest and most spiritual Spirit, till renewed by Participation of his Spirit in our *Flesh*.

And it is the Error, not only of natural Men, but somewhat of the Godly too, that in Self-reformation they set themselves against actual Sin, but they lop not the Ax to the Root of the Tree, this Root of Bitterness, this our inbred and natural Enmity against God; and till this be done, the lopping off of some Branches will do no good, while the Root is in Vigour those will grow again, and possibly faster than before. Bewail every known Act of Sin, as much as you can, for the least of them deserves it: But withal, let the Consideration of them lead you to Thoughts of this Seed of Rebellion, the Wickedness of our Nature, that takes Life with us in the Womb and springs and grows up with us, and this will humble us exceedingly, and raise our godly Sorrows to a higher Tide. We find *David* taketh this Course *Psal.* li. 5. where he is lamenting his particular Sin of Adultery and Murder, it leads him to the Sinsfulness of his Nature, *I was shapen in Iniquity and in Sin did my Mother conceive me*, or, warm me which he mentions, not to extenuate and diminish his Sin; no, he is there very far from that Strain, but adds it as a main Aggravation. Indeed, the Power of original Sin, in the regenerate, is laid very low yet not altogether extinct, which they find often to their Grief, and makes them cry out with our

hostile, in the former Chapter, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death.* The Converted are already delivered (as he adds) from the Dominion of it, but not from the Molestation and Trouble of it. Tho' it is not a quiet and uncontrolled Master, as it was before, yet it is in the House still as an unruly Servant or Slave, ever vexing and annoying them: And this Body of Death they shall have still Cause to bewail, till Death release them. This Leprosy hath taken so deep in the Walls of this House, that it cannot perfectly be cleansed till it be taken down; and it is this, more than any other Sorrows or Afflictions of Life, that makes the godly Man not only content to die, but desirous, longing, with our Apostle, *to be dissolved, and be with Christ, which is far better.*

As this teaches us the Misery of Man's Nature, so it sets off and commends exceedingly the Riches of God's Grace. Are Men naturally his Enemies? Why then, admire his *Patience* and *Bounty* a little, and then we will speak of his *saving Grace*. Could not he very easily ease himself of his Adversaries? as he says by the Prophet. Wants he Power in his Right Hand to find out and cut off all his Enemies? Surely no, not only he hath Power to destroy them all in a Moment, but the very withdrawing of his Hand, that upholds their Being (tho' they consider it not) would make them fall to nothing. Yet is he pleased not only to spare Transgressors, but to give them many outward Blessings, *Rain and fruitful Seasons*, as the Apostle speaks, *Act. xiv.* And the Earth that is so full of Man's Rebellion, is yet more full of his Goodness: *The Earth is full of thy Goodness.* It is remarkable, that that same Reason which is given, *Gen. vi. 5.* of the Justice of God in drowning the World, is, *Chap. viii. 21.* rendred as the Reason of God's resolved *Patience* ever since. Then

His Grace, in finding a Way of Reconcilement, and not sparing his own Son, his only begotten Son, to accomplish it. Nor did he spare himself. O

matchless Love! to lay down his Life, not for Friends but for Strangers! Not only so, but Enemies, for us righteous and ungodly Persons, such as be at Enmity against him, *Rom. v. 7, 8, &c.* And having done this, he sends his Word, the Message of Reconciliation, to Rebels, and sends his Spirit into the Hearts of these whom he hath appointed to Salvation, to change their Spirits, that they perish not in Disobedience; he brings *them near that were far off*, having slain this Enmity by the Death of his Son.

As many of you then, as have hitherto heard this Message of Reconcilement in vain, be persuaded at last to give ear to it. This is all that God's Ambassadors require according to their Instructions from himself, "That Men would lay down that Enmity against him, and not be so foolish as wilfully to perish in it, *2 Cor. v. 20.*"

Consider that this Enmity is, *1st*, Unjust. *2^{dly}*, Unhappy. Unjust it is, being against him who is the chief Object of Love, who is altogether Goodness both in himself and towards his Creatures: It is too much not to love him with most ardent and superlative Affection; but to entertain Enmity against him, is Madness: As he said to one who asked, Why are the beautiful loved? *It is a blind Man's Question.* Certainly we are blind, if we see not Cause enough not only to desist from Enmity, but to be inflamed with his Love. One Glance of his amiable Countenance is sufficient to cause the most rebellious Heart to yield and lay down Arms, and for ever devote themselves to his Service. No, we know him not and therefore it is we hold out against him: Is he not the living Spring of all our Comforts? Have we not from him Life and Breath, and all Things? And is he not ready to forgive *Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*? Let Mercy melt our Hearts to him, those sweet Rays of Love. Let his loving Kindness overcome these stubborn Hearts or Spirits of ours. Among Enemies the weaker usually seeks first for Peace, but here the

Mighty

Mighty; Almighty God comes to intreat Agreement with sinful Clay.

But if this prevail not, then think how unhappy this Enmity is. You that are so afraid of Men, and these, weak Men, of Men like yourselves, whose Breath is in their Nostrils, will ye not tremble at his Power, and be afraid to continue in Terms of Hostility against him who is the Lord of Hosts, who hath Power of the Soul and Body both, to kill both and cast them into Hell? What is the stoutest of Men, but as Stubble to the Flame of his Wrath? *Our God is a consuming Fire. The Sinners in Zion are afraid* (says the Prophet); *who shall dwell, say they, with devouring Fire and everlasting Burnings?* Then if you would not perish, when his Wrath is kindled, take that Word of *Eliphaz*, Job xxii. 21. *Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at Peace, thereby Good shall come unto thee.*

And to you, so many as he hath taken into Friendship with himself, look backward to the Gulf you have escaped, and forward to the Happiness you are appointed to, and let the joint Consideration of both awaken your Hearts and Tongues to Praises. How can your Hearts contain such a Wonder of Love, as he hath manifested to you, and not run over in Songs and Praise?

And as you owe him Praises, so study, being made his Friends, to become more like him: That same *idem velle & idem nolle*, to love and hate the same Things with him, will be a sure Testimony of Friendship. And because Carnality, or fleshly and earthly Mindedness is here made the Character of Enmity, mortify these Affections, nail them to that Cross of Christ, whereby the Enmity was taken away. And further, being once admitted into Friendship, labour for a further Degree of Intimacy with him, and forbear every thing that may hinder that: Use frequent Converse with him, for that both entertains and increases Friendship. If any thing fall out on your part (as it too often does) that may occasion any Strangeness

ness betwixt you and your God, rest not till it be removed. And if you walk in this Way, it shall undoubtedly, at length, bring you where you shall abide in his Presence for ever, and shall no more fear any Breach or Interruption of enjoying him. *To him be Praise. Amen.*

S E R M O N X.

ROMANS XIII. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake, &c.

Owe no Man any thing, but to love one another, &c.

THE Wisdom and Goodness of God, that shines in the natural Order and Dependence of Things in the Frame of the great World, appears likewise, and commends itself to us, in the civil Order he hath instituted in the Societies of Men in the lesser World. As out of the same Mass he made the Heaven and the Earth, and the other Elements betwixt them, one higher than another, and gave them different Stations and Qualities, yet so different as to be linked and concatenated together, *concordia*, and all for the Concern and Benefit of the whole. Thus for the Good of Men, hath the Lord assigned these different Stations of Rule and Subjection, though all of one Race, *Acts xvii.* raising first among Men some above the rest; and clothed them with such Authority, as hath some Representments of himself, and accordingly communicating to them his own Name, *I have said, you are Gods.* And the same Power that is in Magistracy to curb and punish these that despise it, the Apostle useth as a strong and hard Cord to bind on the Duty of Obedience, a

of Necessity. But he adds another of a higher Necessity, that binds more strongly and yet more sweetly, that of Conscience: *Wherefore ye must needs be subject not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake.*

Observe 1. This is the main Consideration that closes the Discourse, the great Cord that binds on and fastens all the rest; all the Arguments foregoing therefore, are mainly here to be prest. "Have a reverent and conscientious Respect to the Ordinance of God in the Institution of Government, and to the Providence of God in his Choice of those particular Persons whom he calls to it. Contain thyself in thy own Station, and submit to those set higher by the Lord, in Obedience to him." This indeed is the only true Spring of all Obedience, both to God and to Men *for him*, and *according to his Ordinance*. To regulate the outward Carriage, without the living Principle of an enlightened and sanctified Conscience within, is to build without a Foundation. This is the thing God eyes most, he looks through the Surface of Mens Actions to the Bottom, follows them into their Source, examines from what Persuasives and Reasons they flow; he sees not only the Handle of the Dial, but all the Wheels and Weights of the Clock that are the Cause of its Motion, and accordingly judges both Men and their Actions to be good or evil as the inward Frame and secret Motions of the Heart are in his own *Worship*. The outside of it may have the same Visage and plausible Appearance in a Multitude convened to it, and concurring in it, and no human Eye can trace a Difference, and yet, oh! what vast Difference doth God's Eye discover amongst them. He sees the Multitude of these that are driven to his House, by the Power of Civil and Church Laws, or carried to it only with the Stream of Company and Custom, and those I fancy take up the most Room in our Churches. But he sees here and there, where such are in any Corner that worship him in Singleness of Heart, out of *conscience* to his holy Command, and of their many Obligations, that dare

not let pass any Opportunity they can reach of doing Service to their Lord, and that dare not slight his Word. And thus, coming for Conscience sake, they do present their Souls to receive his Word, give their Hearts up to receive the Impression of it, put themselves under it, to be stamp't by it according to that *Rom. vi. 17. But ye have obeyed from the Heart that Form of Doctrine which was delivered you.* So likewise he sees those that bear his Name to his People, the Ministers of his Word. If they preach constantly and live blamelessly, and are diligent and irreprovable in all the external parts of their Walking; this last satisfies Mens Questions in their Inspection and Visiting: But God's Enquiry and Visiting searches deeper; he asks from what Heart all this comes, if from a holy Conscience of the Weight and high Importance of their holy Calling, and a faithful Respect to the Interest of their Master's Glory and his People's Souls. And thus, he, as supreme Judge, sits and considers the Proceedings of Judges and Magistrates, not only whether they do that which is just; for often they cannot, easily or safely, do otherwise; but whether they do it with regard to him or not, that is, whether they judge righteously, for Conscience sake, or not; whether they do consider him, as sitting above them, when they sit down upon the Bench or Seat of Justice, and *do indeed truly speak Righteousness,* *Psal. lviii.* Or if in Heart they work Wickedness, if they have any corrupt End, or Hearts that are not straight, he sits on their Heart and judges it. Or if this be done either for *base Gain* or *vain Glory*, or by *Compulsion*, or outward Necessity, or Danger of Censure; or if it be this latter, an inward *Necessity of Conscience*, which makes a true Willingness.

Thus People, if they obey for Wrath, which is, for Fear of the Magistrates Sword, more than for Conscience of the Lord's Command, God accounts not this Obedience, but in his Judgment it goes for no better than Rebellion. It is to be feared, too many Magistrates and others, have in this Nation embraced the

the Reformation, not at all for Conscience sake, but only for Wrath, Fear of Laws and Authority. But although we are not able to follow forth this Search to the full, that being the Lord's own Prerogative; yet, truly, where it is evident to us, that there is nothing of Conscience, though in civil things, it may pass, yet in Things that are peculiarly Matters of Conscience in Religion, Men ought to be somewhat wary, according to the utmost of due discerning, and are possibly somewhat to blame in promiscuous admitting of such, whose Carriage, yea, whose Profession and Religion speaks aloud, that their Compliance was wholly constrained Obedience, only for Wrath, and not for Conscience.

If civil Authority is to be obeyed most for Conscience; then Church Authority, that is more symbolical with Conscience, and hath nearer Reference to it, ought to aim most at that. *Conviction* and *Conversion* is our Work, and not *Constraint*, to bring People both by the Word, and by a Way of Discipline, suiting and backing it, to a Sense of Sin, and spiritual Thoughts of God, and his holy Law, that they may be subject more for Conscience than for Wrath.

And ye People, labour more to find the Actings of that holy Fear of God, and Conscience of his Will, in all your Ways; study to have an inward Light, a practical sanctifying Light, directing you, and be not merely held in as Beasts, by the Authority and Laws of Men, but learn to know, and be sensible of the sovereign Authority of the Most High God and his Law, and to have respect unto all his Commandments. If this were once done, how regular a Motion would it keep amongst all Superiors and Inferiors of all sorts, in Families and States, the one commanding, the other obeying in God? It would be as sweet Musick in the celestial Quire of their Lives and Affairs. Right informing, and right moving Consciences, would be as continual Teachers within, directing all in Obedience, and would make it both

more constant, sweet and pleasant, as natural Motions; whereas, it is grievous and violent, that is from Wrath, or outward Power, and therefore lasts not: As the *Israelites* worshipped God aright while their good Judges lived, and run after Idols when they were removed.

Again: This same Obedience for *Conscience* ennobles and sublimates Mens Actions, even in civil Things; makes them have somewhat divine, turns all into Sacrifice to God, when all is done for God; even Servants and Children obeying Masters and Parents; Subjects Magistrates, for his Commands sake: And still thinking, in the whole Course of their regular due Carriage, in their very Callings; "This I do for God; my ordinary Labour and Works, and my just Obedience to Men I offer up to him." This is the Philosopher's Stone, that turns Actions of lower Metal into Gold; *I set the Lord always before me*, Psal. xvi.

Obs. 2. Kings, and other Powers of the World, who are the Enemies, and sometimes the enraged Persecutors of our holy Religion, mistake their Quarrel, and are very wrongfully misprejudiced against it, and upon that false Supposition do hate and oppose it, suspecting it as an Enemy to their Dignity and Authority; whereas there is nothing that doth so much assert their just Power as Religion doth. Civil Laws may ty the *Hands* and *Tongue* to their Obedience, but Religion binds all due Subjection to them upon the very *Consciences* of their People. Therefore they are both ingrate and unwise, in using their Power against Religion, which it so much strengthens. Their Power should strengthen it, both by way of due Return, to correspond with it in that, and even for its own Interest, receiving a new Establishment to itself by establishing Religion. Even that Master* of irreligious Policy confesses that the Profession of Religion is a Friend to Authority; but if the Shadow of it do any thing that way, we see, contrary to his pro-

* *Machiavel.*

same Supposition, the Substance and Truth of it doth
it much more.

Obs. 3. If for Conscience sake, Subjection; then
sure in nothing against the true Rule of Conscience,
and prime Object of Conscience, the Authority and
Law of God. That is the first and highest, and the
perpetual, unalterable Engagement to him, *binding*
Kings and Subjects, high and low. And if they leave
their Station, we ought to keep ours still in a straight
Subjection to God. For the Extent of Friendship,
and all other Relations, and of all Subjection and O-
bedience, is to be ruled and bounded, *usque ad aras.*
Give to Cæsar the Things that are Cæsar's, but nothing
of God's; neither ours to give, nor his to receive.

For, for this Cause pay you Tribute also. This the
Apostle gives as a Sign of that confessed Right that
Magistrates have to the Subjection and Obedience of
the People, that in all Nations this Homage and Ac-
knowledgment is due to them, *Tribute paid:* Which
it may be he the rather mentions, because some Que-
stion might be, what might Christians do concerning
this. However this, according to the Constitution
of several Places, he takes as granted, to be not only
lawful, but due to be rendred. Here we are not to
insist on the scanning of this; but certainly as the
Power of a Magistrate is not in this, nor in any other
thing, absolute and unbounded, so the legal and just
paying of Tribute and other Revenues by the People,
argues their Engagement to these set over them,
and is not as Wages to a mercenary Servant, but an
Honorary due to their Place and Calling, who are the
Ministers of God in civil Government. So also conve-
nient, yet liberal Maintenance to the Ministers of
God's own House is their Right, yet not to enrich
them; nor yet ought it to be given grudgingly, as
undue; or superciliously, as to Servants; but with the
Chearfulness and Respect agreeable to the Lord's Ser-
vants, watching for their Souls.

All Tribute and Obedience still relates to this, and
is grounded on it, the Lord's Institution of Power

and Government, for the Good of Men. Tho' it sometimes prove otherwise in the Exercise of it, yet the Ordinance is pure, and most wisely suited to its End, from which the Sin and Corruption of Men turns it but too often; so that *one Man* rules over another to his Hurt, to the Hurt of both the Ruler himself and of the Ruled, *Eccl. viii. 9. There is a Time wherein one Man ruleth over another to his own Hurt*; each proving a Scourge to the other in the just Judgment of God upon both for their Iniquities; making a Fire from *Abimelech* to devour the Men of *Shechem*, and the Men of *Shechem* deal treacherously with *Abimelech*, *Judg. ix. 20.* Yet still the Thing itself remains good. Many skilful Physicians may kill instead of curing, yet it is but a Caprice to decry all Remedies, and the Use of Things medicinal, that the God of Nature hath furnished for that Use. Men may, and alas! most do prejudice their own Health, by either intemperate, or some way irregular Diet, yet this makes nothing against the continual Necessity and Use of Food, nor can dissuade any from using it. Thus the Abuses of Authority infringe not this, That Magistrates are a publick Good, yea, the unjust better than none, Tyranny better than Anarchy; there is some Justice done in the most unjust Government.

But thus they that are exalted to rule, ought to consider who raised them, and for what they are raised, and so faithfully to do Justice. They are raised high, as the Stars are set in their Orbs for Influence and the Good of the inferior World, and as the Mountains which rise above the Vallies, not to be Places of Prey and Ruin, but by the Streams they send out to refresh them. So from Magistrates *Judgment ought to run down as Water, and Justice as a mighty Stream.* They ought to consider themselves as *Ministers*, though called *Magistrates* with Relation to the People, yet *Ministers* in Relation to God, *λειτουργοί* *Sa* and the People's in him, as the Word *λειτουργοί* imports, being constant Labourers for their Good.

Even

Even as the *Sun* is a *Minister*, God's Minister of Heat and Light to the Earth. Would they look up thus to God, it would make them look down on their Inferiors, not with the ill Aspect of Pride and Cruelty, but the benign Looks of good Will, Fidelity and Vigilancy, for their Welfare, knowing that they are appointed for this very Use in the World; not referring to that which is nearest here, and nearest themselves, *the receiving of Tribute*, but the remotest Good, which is the chief for which their Tribute and themselves are appointed, the punishing of the Wicked, and Encouragement of the Good.

Render therefore to all their Dues, Tribute to whom Tribute, &c. The Apostle enlarges his Exhortation to the general Rule of Equity. The humble, upright Mind will willingly suit with this, and pay Respect to Men, in *Obedience to God*, and therefore *primarily* to him, which the most neglect. Honour and Fear are due to him as to our Father and Master, and yet where is it to be found? *If I be a Father where is mine Honour? and if I be a Master where is my Fear, &c.* *Mal. i.* The Tribute of Praise and Glory in all these is due, and ought not to be purloined, nor any Part detained, but how few are faithful in this? Much *uncustomed Goods* pass among our Hands in the Course of our Lives, many things wherein we are not mindful to give Glory, entire Glory to God; but he cannot be deceived, if we go on, he will take us in our quietest *Conveyance*, and all will be forfeited. We shall certainly lose all, if all Glory return not to him. All that we have, and are, should we daily and heartily offer up to him, from whom we have Life and Breath, and all things.

Owe no Man any thing, but to love one another, &c. That which the Apostle set before himself, as his own Study and Exercise, *Acts xxiv.* he doth in the latter Part of this Epistle set forth at large, as the Duty of every Christian, to *keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man.* And having in the former part of it, treated amply and excellently of the Doctrine of

Christians Faith and Salvation, and ascended to its highest Cause, he descends from thence to give the Rules of a Christian Life. And he reduces them to those two. 1. To give the Lord his Due, which is, *ourselves entire*; Our Bodies ought to be a *living Sacrifice*, Chap. xii. 1. and *that* they are not without the Soul. And it is Love in the Soul that offers up this whole burnt Offering to God, the Fire that makes it ascend. 2. Towards Men likewise, Love is all, of which in many several Acts of it, he spake likewise in the former Chapter, *Ver. 9. &c.* And having inserted an Exhortation to Subjection to human Authority, as a divine Institution, he now returns to that main comprehensive and universal Duty of Love, and passes fitly from the Mention of other particular Dues to Superiors, to this, as the general Due or standing Debt all Men owe one to another. So, I conceive, this is not intended for the further pressing of that particular Duty of Subjection, by reducing it (seeming hard in itself) to the sweet and pleasant Rule, or Law of Love, but that he passes wholly from that particular to this common Duty, so as that is not excluded but comprehended here with the rest; though not specially aimed at; but a little Rivulet running a while in its own Channel, in the foregoing Discourse, falls here in again to the main Current of the Doctrine of Love, begun in the former Chapter. And here he chuse, adapting it to the Strain of the Discourses immediately foregoing it, to express this under the Notion of a Debt, *Owe nothing, but Love.*

1. Let other Debt be removed: *Owe nothing.* That is, "be not willing to continue Debtors of any thing to any, by undue retaining of such things, which being paid are not owing."

2. "This is a constant Debt, that you must still pay, and yet still owe, *Love*;" and the Reason added, is most enforcing, that we be willing and continue, both *Payers*, and yet *Debtors* of it. The *Due-ness* of it appears in this, that the *Law* requires it; and

and the Compleatness of it, that it is *all* the Law requires, *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*, which is amplified in the two subsequent Verses.

This is most fully true, take Love fully as it looks on its full Object, *God and Man*; and so it is the fulfilling of the whole Law that relates to those two in two Tables. Take it particularly as acting towards Men, (as here it is) and so it fulfils that Part of the Law, that whole Table that respects Man. The most of those Commandments are expressly here set down, and the Omission of one is fully supplied by that Additament, *if there be any other*. Then again, it is cleared by the common Aim and Result of them all, to keep our Neighbour undamaged, and that, Love doth most surely and fully; therefore fulfils all. That negative, *work no Ill*, answers the Strain of all the Commandments, which is to defend our Neighbours from our *Ill*, being most of them such and all of them such that are here specified, yet both they, and this Sum of them, involving the contrary, working of all possible *Good* to our Neighbour, in which still Love suits it, nothing being both more averse from Wrong, and more active in Good, than Love, as the same Apostle hath it, *1 Cor. xiii*. Besides that, it cannot *do*, no, not so much as *think* Evil, it is naturally carried to Bounty and Kindness, and cannot cease from doing Good, a Plant that is fruitful all the Year long.

The Apostle hath very good Authority for this Abridgment of the Law; our Saviour himself, *Matth. xxii. 40*. And He takes it out of the Books of the Law themselves, and certifies *us*, that it is the Substance and Sum both of Law and Prophets. Were this Love absolutely perfect, the fulfilling of the Law would be so too; and where it is sincere, as the Apostle requires it, there is a sincere and evangelical Obedience, or fulfilling of the Law.

In the Text consider, (1.) The Largeness of its Object. (2.) The Largeness of its Acting. (3.) The Height of its true Original.

1. So

1. So far as thou canst acquit thyself, owe nothing else to any but Love, *owe that to all*: Not alike familiar Converse necessarily to all, nor alike Measure of Beneficence, nor alike Degree of Love, but yet Love alike sincere and real to all: Not either a false, or an empty fair Carriage, but holy Christian Love, Love rooted in thy Heart, and springing up in thy Actions, even towards all Men, as thy Opportunity and Ability serves thee, and their Condition requires of thee: Not hating nor despising any for their Poverty in Estate, or Deformity of Body, or Defects of Mind, nor for that which works most on Men, Injuries done to thyself; all they can do cannot give thee an *Acquittance*, or free thee of this *Debt* of Love, for thou art bound to another. This is the Rule of Jesus Christ, and the Badge of Christians, to love their very Enemies; but this, oh! how rare? How few attain it? Yea, how few endeavour it? On the contrary, it is by many given over as a desperate impossible Business, they judging of it not according to that Spirit of Christ that is his, but according to the corrupt Rancour and Bitterness of their own natural perverse Spirits. Yea, and too many disdain it as a *Poor-ness* and *Sheepishness* of Spirit to suffer and forgive. Be it so, yet is it such a *Sheepishness* as makes a Man like *Jesus Christ*, *who as a Sheep before the Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth*, when his Heart within was compassionate towards them, as appeared, when he opened it concerning them, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. This is true Greatness of Spirit to partake of *His*, that is, the highest and best of Spirits, and is the Spirit of *Meekness* and *Love*. How much is this above the common Spirit of the World? Truly, base and poor, is that which is discomposed and put out of Frame with every Touch, whereas this is mighty, and triumphs indeed over all Provocations and Injuries.

2. Let us consider the *Largeness of its Acting*; it goes through the Law, fulfils it all. That Command that is *first* in the *second Table*, that is not here expressed,

preſt, is it not Love that makes all concerned in it,
 to fulfil it? *That* produceth Mildneſs and Modera-
 tion in Superiors, and Faithfulneſs and willing Obe-
 dience in Inferiors; makes both Authority and Sub-
 jection ſweet and eaſy, where Love commands and
 Love obeys. And for the next, *Thou ſhalt not kill*,
 doth not Love (as the Sun Beams) put out the Fire
 by its divine Heat, eat out the earthly, yea, the in-
 fernal Fire of fixed Malice or raſh Anger, that burns
 naturally in the Hearts of Men? Such Anger is cal-
 led *brutiſh*, Ezek. xxi. 31. *burning* or *brutiſh* (and on
 the contrary, *Prov.* xvii. 27. the Ambiguity is hap-
 py, of an excellent or of a cool Spirit, for the cool Spirit
 is ſo; cool from baſe Paſſion, but burning truly with
 this Love,) and then is by very ſmall, and many
 Times merely imaginary Cauſes, ſo eaſily blown up,
 that it flames forth into groſs Murders, or at leaſt ſuch
 Injuries and Violences, or Contentions and Revilings,
 as go in God's Account, and are writ down in his
 Book, for Murders. And he doth not miſjudge, nor
 miſname things, but they are really what he accounts
 them. Love can generously paſs over theſe things,
 about which Folly and Pride makes ſuch a Noiſe.
Ob! can I bear this and that? And thou wouldeſt,
 by ſo ſaying, ſpeak thy ſtout Heartedneſs. Fool, is
 this Stoutneſs and Strength? Is it not rather the
 greateſt Weakneſs to be able to bear nothing? Have
 not the weakeſt Perſons much of that Kind of Stout-
 neſs and Strength, who are the ſoonest moved and
 diſquieted, Women and Children, and ſick or aged
 Perſons? But *Love*, Chriſtian Love to thy Brother,
 makes the Mind truly ſtrong and compoſed, not eaſily
 ſtirred againſt him for every triſle; nay, nor for
 greater Matters. Love can *endure* much, yea *all*
things, ſays the Apoſtle, *1 Cor.* xiii. hath Strength to
ſtand under them, and ſtand firm, whereas baſe Minds,
 void of Love, break all to Pieces under a very ſmall
 Weight. *Bears all*, as the Supporters of a ſtrong and
 firm Building; or rather, as a Houſe, *covers all*, for
 ſo it ſignifies, doth not blaze abroad the Failings of
 Men:

Men: yea, it *bides* much, *covers a Multitude of Sins*; not only from the Eyes of others, but even from a Man's own Eyes, makes him not behold and look on those things, that might provoke him. Yea, it is ingenious and inventive of the fairest Constructions of things, to take them by the best Side, in the favourable Sense, and so long as there is any agreeable Way to interpret any thing favourably, will not have a hard Thought of it, *thinks no Ill*, as there it is. Not only hath not *active evil Thoughts* of Revenge, or returning Evil, but willingly doth not *judge ill* of what is done by others, and that might be so looked on as to provoke, ἡ λογίζεται, doth not *reckon* Wrongs so high as want of Charity moves the most to do, *sets them low*, and, as a healthful Constitution, is sweet itself, and relishes all things right. There is more true Pleasure, and Content of Mind, in forgiving, than ever any Man found in Revenge. That is but a feverish Delight that Malice and Anger hath wrought, working perhaps greedily, but is indeed a Distemper. This Love is the very Root of Peace and Concord, a humble Grace, that is not *lifted up* and *insolent*, as the Word there is, and so doth not breed Jars about Punctilio's; esteems so well of others, and so meanly of itself, that it cannot well be crost by any, in that Matter of undervaluing. But vain Spirits are puffed up with a little Approbation, and as easily kindled up with any Affront, or apprehended Disgrace. Love is not lightly put out of Temper, as sickly Constitutions, a Fit of a Fever or Ague, with any Blast or wrong Touch of Diet, it is of a stronger Digestion, and firmer Health.

Then for that, *not commit Adultery*, all things of that Kind, though they spring from a Kind of Love, yet not from this Love *from above*, but (as the Apostle James distinguishes Wisdom) from the Love that is *sensual* and *devilish*. Love is not the true Name of it, but base and brutish *Lust*. And generally all profane Societies, and Sortings of Men one with another, are most contrary to this pure Love. The Drunk-

ards that are Cup-friends, as they are full of Jars, and have no Constancy, but are unstable as that wherein their Friendship lies, their Liquor, are a vile despicable Society, not worthy of Men, much less of Christians. This Sin hath affinity with Uncleanneſs, and is usually ranked there. Right Love to a Tippler, is not to sit down and guzzle with him, but to reprove and labour to reclaim him, and where that cannot be done, to avoid him. To wicked Persons we owe not a Complacency or Delight, which is most contrary to this Love, but hating their Sin we owe them Love, and the desiring and (as far as Love can) the procuring their Conversion and Salvation. Wicked Converse cannot consist with this Love which is the fulfilling of the Law, and a Combination for the breaking of it, and the joining their Strength together for that End. Love *rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but in the Truth*, makes not Men rejoice together in Sin; so foul unclean Affections, and a Society, in order to the gratifying them, is most contrary to it. True Love is most tender of the Chastity of others, and cannot abide an impure Thought in itself.

So in not Stealing. Love would be loth to enrich or advantage itself, upon the Damage of others in any Kind, it doth most faithfully and singly seek the Profit and Prosperity of our Neighbour, even as our own. And if this took Place, of how much Use were it in the World? But oh! it is rare. This *meum* and *tuum* is the grand Cause of the ill Understanding and Discords that are amongst Men, when it is not managed by this Love but by Self-love.

And the *tendering and preserving of the good Name of our Brethren*, is a proper and very remarkable Fruit of this Love, which is so far from forging false defaming Stories, that it will rather *excuse*, if it may be done, or if not, will *pity* the real Failings of Men that tend to their Reproach; and on the contrary, will teach Men to rejoice in the good Carriage and good Esteem of their Brethren as of their own.

In the End, Love works such a *Complacency* in the Good of others, and such a *Contentation* with our own Estate, that it most powerfully banishes that unruly Humour of *coveting*, which looks on the Condition of others with Envy, and on our own with Grudging and Discontent.

This Law of Love written within, doth not only rectify and order the Hands and Tongue, but the *Jealousies*, the very *Stirrings of the Heart*; it corrects the usual Disorder of its Motion, and bars those uncharitable inordinate Thoughts that do so abound and swarm in carnal Minds.

3. The *Original* of this Love is that other Love which corresponds to the other Part, the first and chief Point of the Law, our *Duty towards God*. Love to him is the Sum and Source of all Obedience; when the whole Soul and Mind is possess'd with that, then all is acceptable and sweet that he commands; first, what he commands as immediately referable to himself, and then, what is the Rule of our Carriage to Men, as being prescribed and commanded by him: For so, and no otherwise, is this Love the fulfilling of the Law, when it flows from that *first* Love, Love to God, whose Law it is that commands this other Love to Men. Some may have somewhat like it, by a Mildness and Ingenuity of Nature, being inoffensive and well-willing towards all; but then only doth it fulfil the Law, when out of Regard to the Law of God it obeys, and obeys out of Love to him whose Law it is. So then, the Love of God in the Heart is the Spring of right and holy Love to our Neighbour, both, (1.) Because in Obedience to him whom we love sovereignly, we will love others sincerely, because he will have it so. That is Reason enough to the Soul possess'd, and taken up with his Love. It loves nothing, how lovely soever, but in him and for him, in Order and Subordination to his Love, and in Respect to his Will; and it loves any thing, how unlovely soever, taking it in that Contemplation. It loves not the dearest Friend but in God, and can love the

the hatefullest Enemy for him, *Amicum in Deo, & inimicum propter Deum*, Aug. His Love can beautify the most unamiable Object and make it lovely. He saith of a worthless undeserving Man, or thy most undeserving Enemy, "Love him for my Sake, because it pleases me;" that is Reason enough to one that loves him. (2.) There is that dilating, sweetening Virtue in Love to God, that it can act no other Way to Men but as becomes Love. Base Self-love contracts the Heart, and is the very Root of all Sin, the chief Wickedness in our corrupt Nature; but the Love of God assimilates the Soul to him, makes it divine; and therefore bountiful, full of Love to all. So these two contradict not, *Love the Lord with all thy Heart*, and *thy Neighbour as thyself*. "If all our Love must go to God, what remains for our Neighbour," Indeed all must go upwards, and be all placed on him, and from thence it is resounded and regulated downwards to Men, according to his Will. But Self-love brings forth Pride, and Cruelty, and Covetousness, and Uncleaness, and Disdain of others; and all such Kind of Monsters; so it is the main breaking of the Law.

All that can be said, will not perswade Men to this, till the Lord by his Love teach it and impress it on the Heart. Know that this is the Badge of Christ's Followers, and his great Rule and Law given to them; and if you will follow him, that you may come to be where he is, then study this, That as our Lord Christ loved us, so also we ought to love one another.

S E R M O N XI.

P R E F A C E.

GREAT and various are the Evils that lodge within the Heart of Man. Hence proceed *evil Thoughts, Adulteries, Murders*, and many other Mischiefs, as our Saviour specifies there; they come forth apace, and yet the Heart is not emptied of them. But was this Heart thus at first, when it came newly forth of the Hands of its maker? Surely, no: *Man was made upright, but he found out many Inventions*. Soon did the Heart find the Way to corrupt itself; but to renew itself, is as impossible as to have been the Author of its own Creation. Easily could it deface the precious Characters of God's Image, but it passes the Art of Men and Angels to restore them. Only the Son of God, who for that Purpose took on him our Nature, can make us, according to the Apostle's Phrase, *partakers of the divine Nature*. It is he alone that can banish these unclean Spirits, and keep Possession that they return no more. Have not they made a happy Change of Guests, that have those infernal Troops turned out of Doors, and the King of Glory fixing his Abode within them. This is the Voice of the Gospel, *Lift up your Heads ye Gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting Doors that the King of Glory may enter in* *. But small is the Number of those that open where this Voice is daily sounded. Yea, some there are that grow worse under the frequent Preaching of the Word as if Sin were emulous, and, as is said of Virtue would grow by Opposition. The Truth is, too many of us turn these serious Exercises of Religion into an idle Divertisement. Take heed that Formality, and Custom, and Novelty, do not often help to fill up

* *Psal. xxiv. 7.*

many Rooms in our Church. It were indeed a Breach of Charity, to entertain the Fulness of your Assemblies with ill Construction; no, it is to be commended. But would to God we were more careful to shew our Religion in our Lives, to study to know better the Deceits and Impostures of our own Hearts, and to gain daily more Victory over our secret and best beloved Sins. Let our Intentions then be to meet with Christ here, and to admit him gladly to dwell and rule within us. If he conquer our inward Enemies, those without shall not be able to hurt us. If he deliver us from our sinful Lusts, he will still our own distrustful Fears. And that such may be the Fruits of our Meeting, let us turn ourselves towards the Throne of Grace, with humble Prayer, in the Name of Jesus Christ the Righteous.

PSAL. LXXVI. 10.

Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee: The Remainder of Wrath shalt thou restrain.

WHAT Man is this (said the Passengers in the Ship) that even the Winds and the Sea obey him? Christ suddenly turns a great Tempest into a greater Calm, *Matth. viii. 27.* Surely those are no ordinary Words of Command, that swelling Waves and boisterous Winds, in the midst of their Rage, are forced to hear, and taught to understand and obey him. Therefore the holding of the Seas in the hollow of his Hand, the bridling of the Wind, and riding upon the Wings of it, we find peculiarly attributed to the Almighty. But no less, if not more wonderful is another of his Prerogatives, to wit, His Sovereignty over all Mankind, over the divers and strange Motions of the Heart of Man. Admirable is it to govern those, both in respect of their Multitude and Irregularity. Consider we what Millions of Men dwell at once upon the Face of the Earth; and again, what Troops of several Imaginations will pass through the Fancy of any one Man, within the Com-

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pass of one Day. 'Tis much to keep Eye upon them, and to behold them all at once, but far more to command and controul them all; yet if they were all loyal and willingly obedient, were they tractable and easily curbed, it were more easy for us to conceive how they might be governed. But to bound and overrule the unruly Hearts of Men, the most of whom continually are either plotting or acting Rebellion against their Lord, to make them all concur and meet at last in one End, cannot be done but by a Power and a Wisdom that are both infinite. That God (whose Name we often mention, but seldom think on his Excellency) is alone the absolute Monarch of Men's Hearts, and the Ruler of all their Motions. He hath them limited while they seem most free, and works his own Glory out of their Attempts, while they strive most to dishonour him. *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee, &c.*

The Psalm is made up of these two different Sorts of Thoughts, the one arising out of *particular Experience*, and the other out of a *general Doctrine*. These drawn from Experience are set down in the Verses preceding the Text, and in it. With those that follow is the *Doctrine*, with a *Duty* annexed to it; which two are Faith's main Supporters. Bypass Particulars verify the Doctrine, and the Generality of the Doctrine serves to explain the particular Experiences to all wise Observers. There is not a Treasure of the *Merits* of Saints in the Church, (as some dream) but there is a Treasure of the precious *Experiences* of the Saints, which every Believer hath Right to make use of; and these we should be versed in, that we may have them in readiness at hand, in time of need, and know how to use them, both to draw Comfort from them to ourselves, and Arguments to use with God.

The Words contain clearly two Propositions, both of them concerning the *Wrath of Man*. The former hath the Event of it, *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee*: The latter, the Limitation of it, *The Remainder of Wrath thou wilt restrain*.

That the Virtues and Graces of Men do praise the Lord, all Men easily understand, for they flow from him, his Image and Superscription is upon them, and therefore no wonder if of them he has from them a Tribute of Glory. Who knows not that Faith praises him? *Abraham believed and gave Glory to God.* Good Works, the Fruits of Faith, praise him too, *Herein is your heavenly Father glorified* (says our Saviour) *that you bring forth much Fruit.* But that the inordinate Wrath of Man should praise him, may seem somewhat strange. Were it God's own Wrath, (as Wrath is attributed to him in Scripture) that might praise him, for it is always most just; or were it a due and moderate Anger of Man, upon just Cause, that were fit for praising him too, in despite of the *Stoicks*. But that *wicked and disordered Wrath*, (which is undoubtedly here meant) that the *Wrath of Men*, that is both uncomely and dishonourable for themselves, (though they think otherwise) that even such a Wrath should honour God, and praise him, argues well that he hath good Right to Praises, when every thing, even things that seem contrary to his Nature, as well as to his Law, do pay them to him: And that he hath great Power and Wisdom who obtains what is due to him, even from those Persons and Things, that of themselves are most unwilling and unfit to pay it. This is the excellent Skill of his Wisdom, to draw that which shall go into the making up of the precious Composition of his Praise out of this *Poison*, for so the Word, here used for *wrathful Heat*, doth sometimes signify. And this Wrath often proves so, a deadly Poison both to those it is incensed against, and to the very Breast that breeds it, and wherein it is kindled.

But for the clearer understanding of this, I conceive it will be requisite to consider more distinctly: (1.) What this *Wrath of Man* is. (2.) How it can praise God. And lastly, The *Infallibility* of this Event, *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee.*

In the 148th *Pſalm*, where *David* ſummons the Creatures to meet in that Song of Praise, to keep that full Conſort, he calls not only the Heavens, and the Inhabitants of it, Angels and Lights, but theſe of the lower World to bear their Part in it; and not only Men, Beaſts, Cattle, creeping Things, and the flying Fowl, but theſe Creatures that do moſt reſemble this Wrath here ſpoken of, Fire, ſtormy Tempeſt, and Dragons, &c. The Tenor of the *Pſalm* doth ſhew, that by the *Wrath of Man* is to be underſtood “ the undue Rage of evil and ungodly Men againſt thoſe whom God owns for his People.” The Word here uſed ſignifies a *hot* or *inflaming* Wrath; and indeed ſuch is the feveriſh diſtemper’d Anger of the Church’s Enemies. And as too much Heat is an Enemy to ſolid Reaſon, this hot Wrath of theirs makes them incapable of wiſe Deliberation in themſelves, and inflexible to the good Advice of others. ’Tis true, they take Counſel how to execute their Wrath, as we ſhall hear anon, but they take no Counſel that may cool it. Anger deſcribed by its material Cauſe, is called a boiling of the Blood about the Heart; but this ariſeth from the Apprehenſion of ſomething offensive, kindling a Deſire of Revenge. Now it is a Wonder what the Powers of the World find in Chriſt and his harmleſs Flock that can incenſe them. St. *James* ſays of the Tongue, *that it is ſet on Fire of Hell*. The ſame is the Original of this Wrath, *Why doth the Heathen rage?* ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*. That is, not only *to what Purpose?* intimating that it is a fruitleſs Rage, and void of Succeſs, in regard of God’s Power. But *why?* that is, *upon what occaſion?* checking the Rage as groundleſs and without Cauſe, in regard of Chriſt and his Church’s Innocency. The Cauſe is only within themſelves, to wit, that unhappy Antipathy of the Serpent’s Seed againſt the Seed of the Woman. Thus this Wrath of Man is the cauſeleſs, malicious Enmity of the Wicked againſt the Church of God. And under the Name of this Paſſion I take to be here compris’d likewise all the Attendants

tendants of it, all their crafty Complotments and Devices for the acting of their Wrath. As there is Mention of the Nation's Rage against Christ, in the 2d Psalm, so likewise of the Consultations of those that are of Quality fit for it, *The Rulers take Counsel together.* Further, this Wrath is not barely their inward Fire, but the Vent of it flames into cruel and outrageous Practices, including likewise all the Instruments they make use of. And of all these 'tis true, that God shall gain Glory by them, Surely *the Wrath of Man shall praise thee.*

The *Wrath of Man* (says the Apostle) *accomplisheth not the Righteousness of God*; how then can it accomplish his Praises? And this is the second Thing propounded.

Are Grapes gathered of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles? Surely no; therefore I called this Praise, not the Fruit or proper Effect of Man's Wrath, but the Event or Consequent of it, by the Efficacy of Divine Providence. *The Wrath of Man shall praise thee.* "The Use which thou wilt make of it shall tend to thy Praise. Thou wilt produce such Effects from it, both in the Church and upon thine Enemies, when thou sufferest thy Wrath to break forth, as shall furnish more Matter of thy Praises than if thou hadst altogether restrained it." To instance this in some few Particulars.

'Tis the Fury of the Church's Enemies that has made known to the World the invincible *Courage and Patience of the Saints.* Those Ages that have been most monstrous in Persecution, have most of all graced Christianity. Had there been no persecuting Emperors, who should have heard of those primitive Martyrs, that triumph'd over the Cruelty of their Torments? Were there no Persecution, nor Peril, nor Sword, against Believers, we should not have heard the Apostle say immediately after the Mention of those, *In all these we are more than Conquerors,* They could not have been so much as *Conquerors*, had there been no *Conflict.*

Again, as the Wrath of Man praises God in the invincible Patience of the Saints, so likewise in the *immoveable Stability of the Church*. Is it not wonderful how so small and weak a Company, as the Church hath often been reduced to, yea, hath always been, in respect of the World, could escape the Mouths of so many Lions, so many enraged Enemies that were ready to devour it? And that we may see that this tends solely to the Praise of her great Protector, look the Church's Song penned by the Royal Prophet, it is the 124th Psalm, *If it had not been the Lord that was on our side, when Men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick*. The great Monarchies and Kingdoms of the World, that have risen with so much Splendor, have had their Periods, and been buried in the Dust. That golden-headed and silver-bodied Image degenerated into worse Metal as it went lower, and the brittle Feet was the Cause of the Fall and breaking of all the rest. But the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, though despicable in the World, and exposed to the Wrath of the World in all Ages, stands firm and cannot be removed. There is a common Emblem of the Winds blowing from all Quarters, and upon the Globe of the Earth, being in the Middle of them, is written *Immobilis*. This fitly resembles the Church. Why? It seems to be the Sport of all the Winds, but is indeed so established, that all of them, yea, *the very Gates of Hell cannot prevail against it*. Now the more the Church's Enemies labour and moil themselves to undo her, the more doth their Weakness and the Power of her Lord appear; so that thus *the Wrath of Man doth praise him*.

When was the Church free from the World's Wrath? To say nothing of the Church of the *Jews*, did not those wicked Emperors of *Rome* think to have made the Christian Church short lived, to have drowned her, newly born, in Floods of her own Blood? And in later Ages, who knows not the Cruelties that have been practised by the *Turk* in the East, and the proud Prelate of *Rome* in the West? by which
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she hath sometimes been brought to so obscure and low a Point, that if you can follow her in History, 'tis by the Tract of her Blood; and if you would see her, 'tis by the Light of those Fires in which her Martyrs have been burnt. Yet hath she still come through, and survived all that Wrath, and still shall, till She be made perfectly triumphant.

Further: *Man's Wrath* tends to God's Praise in this, "That God, giving way to it, does so manage it by his sublime Providence, that it often directly crosses their own Ends, and conduces manifestly to his." *Pharaoh* thought that his Dealing more cruelly with the *Jews* in their Tasks and Burdens was Wisdom: *Let us work wisely* (says he.) But whereas their ordinary Servility was become familiar to them, and they were tamed to it, that same Accession of new Tyranny did prepare and dispose the *Israelites* for a Desire of Departure, and their Departure made way for *Pharaoh's* Destruction. Undigestible Insolency and Rage, hastening to be great, makes Kingdoms cast them off, which would have been far longer troubled with their Wickedness, had it been more moderate. Surely then the Wrath of Man commends the Wisdom of God, when He makes him by that contrive and afford the Means of his own Downfal. *Job* xviii. 7. *The Steps of his Strength shall be straitned, and his own Counsel shall cast him down,* says *Bildad*. And that is a sad Fall; as that Eagle that was shot with an arrow trimmed with her own Fathers.

But to close this Point. It is out of all Question, that the deserved Punishment of Man's unjust Wrath, doth always glorify the *Justice of God*, and the more he gives way to their Wrath, the more notable shall be both their Punishment and the Justice of it. And though God seems neglective of his People and of his Praise, while Man's Wrath prevails, yet the Truth is, he never comes too late to vindicate his Care of both; and when he defers longest, the Enemy pays dear Interest for the Time of Forbearance. In his eternal Decree, he resolved to permit the Course of

Man's Wrath for his own Glory, and when the Period which he hath fixed is come, he stops Man's Wrath, and gives Course unto the Justice of his own. Nor is there then any Possibility of escaping; he will right himself, and be known by executing Judgment. *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee.* And that is the third Thing propounded, the *Infallibility of the Event.*

The Author of Nature governs all his Creatures, each in a suitable way to the Nature he hath given them. He maintains in some things a *natural Necessity* of working, *Contingency* in others; and in others *Liberty*. But all of them are subject to this *Necessity* of effecting inevitably his eternal Purposes; and this Necessity is no way repugnant to the due Liberty of Man's Will. Some entertain and maintain the Truth; some plot, others act and execute against it; some please themselves in a wise Neutrality, and will appear so indifferent, that it would seem they might be accepted of all Sides for Judges of Controversies. And all these find no less Liberty to wind and turn themselves whither they please, than if no higher Hand had the winding of them. Shall not only the *Zeal* of the Godly, but even the *Wrath* of the Enemy, and the *cold Discretion* of the neutral, all tend to his Praise, whose supream Will hath a secret, but a sure and infallible Sway in all their Actions? Whilst some Passengers sit, some walk one Way, some another, some have their Faces towards their Journey's End, some their Back turned upon it, this wise Pilot does most skilfully guide the Ship to arrive with them all, at his own Glory. Happy they that propound and intend his Glory as he himself does, for in them shall the Riches of his Mercy be glorified. They that oppose him, lose this Happiness, but he is sure not to lose his Glory for all that, to wit, the Glory of his Justice. His right Hand shall find out all his Enemies; *surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee,*

The Consideration of this Truth, *thus* in some Measure unfolded, may serve to justify the truly wise Dispensation of God against our imaginary Wisdom. Were the Matter referred to our modelling, we would assign the Church constant Peace and Prosperity for her Portion, and not consent that the least Air of Trouble should come near her. We would have no Enemies to molest her, nor stir against her, or if they did stir, we would not have them to be presently repress'd, and these, in our Judgment, would be the fairest and most glorious Tokens of *his* Love and Power, whose Spouse she is. But this carnal Wisdom is Enmity against God, and to the Glory of God, which rises so often out of the Wrath of his enemies. Had God caused *Pharaoh* to yield at the very first, to the Release of his People, where had been the Fame of those miraculous Judgments in *Egypt*, and Mercies on the *Israelites*, the one setting out and illustrating the other? Where had been that Fame and Honour that God says he would gain to himself, and that he did gain out of *Pharaoh's* final destruction, making that stony-hearted King, and his Troops, *sink like a stone in the Waters*, as *Moses* sings? Observe his proud Boastings immediately foreboding his Ruin, *I will pursue*, says he, *I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil, my Lust shall be satisfied with them; I will draw my Sword, and my Hand shall destroy them*; soon after, the Sea quenches all this great. Commonly big Threatnings are unhappy Pre-
 ces of very ill Success. That Historian says well of God *, *God suffers no other to think highly of himself, but himself alone*. And indeed, as he abhors these Boastings, so he delights in the abasing of the proud Heart whence they flow, and it is his Prerogative to gain Praise to himself out of their Wrath, *Hast thou an Arm like God*, (says the Lord to *Job*) *then look upon the proud and bring them low*, *Job* xl. 9. 11. When *Sennacherib* came up against *Jerusalem*, his Blasphemies,

Deus neminem alium, quàm seipsum, finit de se magnificè sentire.

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Blasphemies and Boastings were no less vast and monstrous than the Number of his Men and Chariots; good *Hezekiah* turned over the Matter unto God, spreading the Letter of Blasphemies before him; God undertook the War, and assured *Hezekiah* that the *Affyrian* should not so much as shoot an Arrow against the City, *but return the same Way he came*, 2 Kings 19. And the Deliverance there promised and effected, is conceived to have been the Occasion of penning the very *Psalm*. Surely when an Angel did in one Night slay 185000 in their Camps, that Wrath and those Threats, tended exceedingly to the Praise of the God of *Israel*. The Hook that he put in *Sennacherib*'s Nostrils, (as the History speaks) to pull him back again, was more remarkable than the Fetters would have been, if he had tied him at home, or hindered his March with his Army.

Who is he then that will be impatient because of God's Patience, and judge him slack in Judgment while the Rage of the Wicked prevails a while? Know that he is more careful of his own Glory than we can be, and the greater Height Man's Wrath rises to, the more Honour shall arise to him out of it. Did not his Omnipotency shine brighter in the Flame of that Furnace into which the Children were cast, than if the King's Wrath had been at first cooled? Certainly, the more both it and the Furnace had the Heat augmented, the more was God glorified. *What is that God* (saith he blasphemously and proudly) *that can deliver you out of my Hands?* a Question indeed highly dishonouring the Almighty, but stay, till the real Answer come, and not only shall that Wrath praise him, but that very same Tongue, though inured to Blasphemy, shall be taught to bear a main Part in the Confession of these Praises. Let that Apostate Emperor * go taunting the Head and tormenting the Members of that mystical Body, his closing with

ἐνίκησας γαλιλαῖε, *Thou hast overcome, O Galilee* (meaning Christ) shall help to verify that. Whether

its Course be shorter or longer, Man's Wrath ends always in God's Praise. In like Manner, the closing of the Lions Mouths spake louder to his Praise that stopt them, than if he had stopt *Daniel's* Enemies in the Beginning of their wicked Design. So hot was their Rage, that the King's favourable Inclination to *Daniel* (of which, in other Cases Courtiers use to be so devout Observers) yea his contesting and pleading for him did profit him nothing, but they hurried their King to the Execution of their unjust Malice, though themselves were convinced, that nothing could be found against him, but only concerning the Law of his God. *Dan. vi. 14.* It is said, *he set his Heart upon him to deliver him, and laboured to do it till the going down of the Sun*, and then those Counsellors, and Counsels of Darkness overcame him. But upon this black Night of their prevailing Wrath, followed immediately a bright Morning of Praises to *Daniel's* God. When the Lions that were so quiet Company all Night to *Daniel*, made so quick a Breakfast of those accursed Courtiers that had maliciously accused him. *Even so let thine Enemies perish, O Lord, and let those that love thee, be as the Sun when he goes forth in his Might.*

The other Proposition concerns the limiting of this Wrath. *The Remainder of Wrath thou wilt restrain.*

To take no Notice, for the present, of divers other Readings of these Words, the Sense of them, as they are here very well rendered, may be briefly this, That whereas the Wrath of Man to which God gives way, shall praise him, the rest shall be *curbed* and *bound up*, as the Word is, no more of it shall break forth than shall contribute to his Glory. Here should be considered divers Ways and Means, by which God useth to stop the heady Course of Man's Wrath, and hinder its proceeding any further. But only,

Let us take out of it this Lesson, "That the most compendious way to be safe from the Violence of Men, is to be in Terms of Friendship with God." It is not an incomparable Privilege to be in the Fa-

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your, and under the Protection of one whose Power
 is so transcendent, that no Enemy can so much as stir
 without his Leave? Be perswaded then, Christians,
 in these Dangers that are now so near us, every one
 to draw near to him; remove what may provoke
 him; let no reigning Sin be found either in your Ci-
 ties, or in your Villages, for he is a holy God. Is it
 a Time to multiply Provocations now, or is it not
 rather high Time to be humbled for the former?
 What shameless Impiety is it, to be now licentious or
 intemperate? To be proud, to oppress or extort?
 To profane God's Day, and blaspheme his Name?
 All these Sins, and many others, abound amongst
 us, and that avowedly. Without Abundance of Re-
 pentance for these we shall smart, and the Wrath of
 our Enemies, though unjust in them, shall praise
 God in our just Punishment; though doubtless, he
 will own his Church, and be praised likewise in the
 final Punishment of their Wrath, that rise against it.
 There is a remarkable Expression in the xcix. Psalm
 of God's Dealing with his People, *he was favourable*
to them, though he took Vengeance on their Inventions.
 A good Cause and a Covenant with God, will not
 shelter an impenitent People from sharper Correction.
 It is a sad Word God speaks by his Prophet to his
 own People, *I myself* (says he) *will fight against you.*
 A dreadful Enemy! and none indeed truly dreadful
 but he. O prevent his Anger and you are safe en-
 ough. If perverse Sinners will not hear, yet let
 those that are indeed Christians mourn in secret, not
 only for their own Sins, but let them bestow some
 Tears likewise upon the Sins of others. Labour to
 appease the Wrath of God, and he will either ap-
 pease Man's Wrath, or howsoever, will turn it joint-
 ly to our Benefit and his own Glory. Let the Fear
 of the most high God, who hath no less Power over
 the strongest of his Enemies than over the meanest of
 his Servants; let his Fear, I say, possess all our Hearts
 and it will certainly expel that ignoble and base Fear
 of the Wrath of Man. See how the Prophet opposeth

them in that 8th of *Isaiah*, *Fear not their Fear* (says he) *nor be afraid, but sanctify the Lord, and let him be your Fear, and let him be your Dread*; fear not, but fear. This holy Fear begets the best Courage; the Breast that is most filled with it, abounds most in true Magnanimity. Fear thus, that you may be confident, not in yourselves, though your Policy and Strength were great, (*curst is the Man that trusteth in Man, and maketh Flesh his Arm*) but confident in that God, who is too wise and vigilant to be surprized, too mighty to be foiled, and too rich to be out-spent in provision; who can suffer his Enemy to come to the highest Point of apparent Advantage, without any inconvenience, yea, with more Renown in his Conquest. And so a Christian who is made once sure of his (as easily he may, is little careful about the rest, his Love to God prevailing over all his Affections, makes him very indifferent what becomes of himself or his dearest Friends, so God may be glorified. What though many fall in the Quarrel (which God overturn) yet it is sufficient that Truth in the End shall be victorious. Have not the Saints in all Ages been content to convey pure Religion to Posterity, in streams of their own Blood, not of others? Well, hold fast by this Conclusion, that God can limit and bind up the most violent Wrath of Man, that though as swell it will not break forth. The stiffest Heart, as the Current of the most impetuous Rivers, is in his Hand, to appoint its Channels, and turn it as he pleaseth. Yea, it is he that hath shut up the very Sea with Bars and Doors, and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, here shall thy proud Waves be stayed*, Job xxxviii. 10, 11. To see the Surges of a rough Sea come in towards the Shore, a Man would think that they were hastening to swallow up the Land, but they know their Limits, and are beaten back into Foam. Though the Waves thereof toss themselves as angry at their Restraint; yet the small Land is a Check to the great Sea, yet can they not prevail,

vail, though they roar, yet can they not pass over it, says Jeremiah v. 22.

The Sum is this : What God permits his Church's Enemies to do, is for his own further Glory ; and reserving this, there is not any Wrath of Man so great, but he will either sweetly calm it, or strongly restrain it. *To him be praise, &c.*

S E R M O N XII.

PSAL. CXII. 7.

He shall not be afraid of evil Tidings ; his Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

ALL the special Designs of Men agree in this. They seek Satisfaction and Quietness of Mind, that is, Happiness. This then is the great Question, Who is the happy Man ? It is here resolved, *Ver. 1. Blessed is the Man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth in his Commandments.*

The Blessedness is unfolded as a rich Landskip, that we may view the well mixed Colours, the Story and Tissue of it, through the whole *Alphabet* in capital Letters. And take all and set them together, it is a most full compleat Blessedness, not a Letter wanting to it. * Amongst the rest, *that* we have in these Words is of a greater Magnitude and Brightness than many of the rest, *He shall not be afraid of evil Tidings.*

Well may it begin with a *Hallelujah*, a Note of Praise to Him in whom this Blessedness lies. O what a wretched Creature were Man, if not provided to such a Portion

* This Psalm in the *Hebrew* consists of 22 short Verses, each of which begins with the Letters of the Alphabet in their Order, and they are all ended. No one Letter is here omitted, as is the Case in the 25th Psalm where the same Order is observed.

Portion, without which is nothing but Disappointment; and thence the racking Torment and Vexation of a disquieted Mind, still pursuing somewhat that he never overtakes.

The first Words are the Inscription, *The Blessedness of that Man!* &c. So the Particulars follow: Where outward Blessings are so set, as that they look and lead higher, pointing at their End, the *infinite Goodness* whence they flow, and whither they return and carry along with them this happy Man.

And these Promises of outward Things are often evidently accomplish'd to the Righteous, and their seed after them, and that commonly after they have been brought very low. But when it is otherwise with them, they lose nothing. 'Tis good for *many*, yea, 'tis good for *all* the Godly that have less of these lower Things, to raise their Eye to look after higher, the Eye of *all*, both of those that are held somewhat short, and for those that have Abundance in the World.

These temporal Promises were more abounding and more frequently fulfilled, in their very kind, in the Times of the Law, yet still the Right is constant, and all Ages do give clear Examples of the Truth of this Word. Where it is thus, 'tis a Blessing created by its Aspect to this Promise, and so differs from the prosperity of ungodly Men; and where 'tis otherwise with the Righteous and their Seed, 'tis no Shift, but a most solid Comfort, to turn their Eyes to a higher Compensation.

But howsoever it go, this still holds, *He shall not be afraid of evil Tidings*. Notwithstanding the hardest News that can come to his Ears, of any thing that concerns himself or his Children, or the rest of God's Children in his Charge in the World, *His Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*.

First, let us take a little of the Character of this blessed Man. Who is it that is thus undaunted? *The Man that feareth God*.

All the Passions are but several Ebbings and Flowings of the Soul, and their Motions are the Signs of its Temper. Which way it is carried, *that* is mainly to be remarked by the beating of its Pulse. If our Desires, and Hopes, and Fears, be in the Things of this World, and the Interest of Flesh, this is their Distemper and Disorder, the Soul is in a continual Fever; But if they move Godwards, then is it composed and calm, in a good Temper and healthful Point, fearing and loving him, desiring him, and nothing but him, waiting for him, and trusting in him. And when any one Affection is right, and in a due Aspect to God, all the rest are so too: For they are radically one, and he is the Life of that Soul that is united to him; and so in him it moves in a peculiar spiritual Manner, as all do naturally in the Dependence of their natural Life, on him that is the Fountain of Life.

Thus we have here this Fear of God, as often elsewhere, set out as the very Substance of Holiness and Evidence of Happiness. And that we may know there is nothing either base or grievous in this Fear, we have joined with it, *Delight* and *Trust*; *delighting greatly in his Commandments*: Which is that Badge of *Love to him*, to observe them, and that with Delight and with exceeding great Delight. So then, the Fear is not that which Love casts out, but that which Love brings in. This Fear follows and flows from Love, a Fear to offend, whereof nothing so tender as Love and that, in respect of the Greatness of God, hath it withal a humble Reverence. There is in all Love a kind of Reverence, a cautious and respective Warmth towards the Party loved; but especially in this, where not only we stand in a lower Relation, as Children to our Father, but the Goodness that draws our Love doth infinitely transcend our Measures and Reach, therefore there is a *rejoicing with trembling* and an awful Love, the *fearing the Lord and his Goodness*, Hof. iii. ult. This both *Fear* and *Trust*, the Heart touch'd by the Spirit of God, as the Need touch

touch'd with the Loadstone, looks straight and speedily to God, yet still *with trembling*, being filled with this holy Fear.

That delighteth] Oh! this is not only to do them, but to do them with Delight; somewhat within is connatural and symbolical: Yea, this very Law itself is writ within, not standing as a hard Task-master over our Head, but impress'd within as a sweet Principle in our Hearts, and working from thence naturally. This makes a Soul find Pleasure in purging out of sensual Pleasures, and Ease in doing Violence to corrupt Self, even undoing it for God, having no Will but his: The Remainders of Sin and Self in our Flesh will be often rising up, but this predominant Love dispels them. So this Fear works with Delight.

And further, that we may know how serene and sweet a thing it is, it is here likewise joined with Confidence, *Trusting*, a quickening Confidence always accompanying it; and so, undoubtedly, it is a blessed thing. *Blessed is he that feareth.* Fear sounds rather quite contrary, hath an Air of Misery; but add, *Whom?* He that *feareth the Lord*, that Touch turns into Gold. He that so fears, fears not: *He shall not be afraid*; all petty Fears are swallowed up in this great Fear, as a Spirit inured with great Things is not stir'd nor affected at all with small Matters. And this great Fear is as sweet and pleasing as these little Fears are anxious and vexing. Secure of other things, he can say, "If my God be pleased, no matter who is displeased; no matter who despise me, if he account me his; tho' all forsake me, my dearest Friends grow estranged, and look another way, if he reject me not, that is my only Fear; and for that I am not perplexed, I know he will not." As they answered *Alexander* when he sent to enquire what they most feared, thinking possibly they would have said, *Lest he should invade them*: Their Answer was, *We fear nothing but lest Heaven should fall upon us*; which they did not fear

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neither.

neither. A Believer hath no Fear but of the Displeasure of Heaven, the Anger of God to fall upon him, he fears *that*; that is, accounts *that* only terrible; but yet he doth not fear, doth not apprehend it will fall on him, is better persuaded of the Goodness of his God. So this *Fear* is still joined with *Trust*, as here, so often elsewhere, *Psal.* xxxiii. 18. xl. 3. and cxlvii. 11.

There is no Turbulency in this Fear, 'tis calm and sweet; even that most terrible Evil, that which this Fear properly apprehends and flies, *Sin*, yet the Fear of that goes not to a Distraction. Tho' there is little Strength, and many and great Enemies, mighty *Anakims* of Temptations from without, and Corruption within, and so good Reason for a holy humble Fear and Self-distrust, yet this should not beat us off; yea, is most fit to put us on to trust in him who is our Strength. Courage! the Day shall be ours, tho' we may be often foiled and down, and sometimes almost at a hopeless Point, yet our *Head* is on high, he hath conquered for us, and shall conquer in us; therefore, upon this Confidence, so fear as not to fear, *Why should I fear in the Days of Evil when the Iniquity of my Heels shall compass me about?* *Psal.* xlix. 5. (which I take is some grievous *Affliction*, and that with a Visage of Punishment of Sin; Guiltiness to be read in it, yet not Fear.) "If I trusted in
" Wealth, and boast myself in the Multitude of
" Riches, then that being in hazard, I must fear;
" leaning on that, it failing, I might fall. But this
" is my Confidence, *Ver.* 15. *God will redeem my*
" *Soul from the Power of the Grave*, for he shall re-
" ceive me; Wealth cannot, but he can. It buys
" not a Man out from his Hand, but he buys from
" the Hand of the Grave." So the Word is; for the visible Heavens even their Fall, and the Dissolution of Nature, would not affright a Believer, *Psal.* xlv. 1. *Si fractus illabitur orbis, &c.*

Alas! most Persons have dull or dim Apprehensions and shallow Impressions of God, therefore they have

have little either of this *Fear* or this *Trust*. God is not in all their Thoughts, but how to compass this or that Design; and if they miss one, then to another, they are cast from one Wave upon another: And if at any time they attain their Purpose, find it but Wind, a Handful of nothing, far from what they fancied it.

Oh! my Brethren, my Desire is, that the Faces of our Souls were but once turn'd about, that they were towards him, looking to him, continually fearing him, *delighting*, *trusting* in him, making him your All. Can any thing so elevate and ennoble the Spirit of a Man, as to contemplate and converse with the pure ever-blessed Spring and Father of Spirits? Beg that you may know him, that he would reveal himself to you; for otherwise no teaching can make him known, 'tis to light Candles to seek the Sun, to think to attain to this Knowledge without his own revealing. If he hide his Face, who then may behold him? Pray for this quickening Knowledge, such a Knowledge as will effectually work this happy *Fear* and *Trust*.

You that have attained any thing of it, desire and follow on to know the Lord, particularly, so as your Hearts may repose on him; so fear as you may not fear. He would have our Spirits calm and quiet, for when they are in a Hurry and Confusion, they are then fit for nothing; all within makes a jarring unpleasant Noise, as of an Instrument quite out of Tune.

This Fear of God is not, you see, a perplexing, doubting, and distrust of his Love; on the contrary, 'tis a fixed resting and trust on his Love. Many that have some Truth of Grace are, through Weakness, filled with disquieting Fears; so possibly, tho' they perceive it not, it may be in some a Point of Wilfulness, a little latent undiscern'd Affectation of scrupling and doubting, placing much of Religion in it. True, where the Soul is really solicitous about its Interest in God, that argues some Grace, but being

vexingly anxious about it, it argues that Grace is low and weak: A Sparkle there is even discovered by that Smoke; but the great Smoke still continuing, and nothing seen but it, argues there is little Fire, little Faith, little Love.

And this, as it is unpleasant to thyself, so to God, as Smoke to the Eyes. What if one should be always questioning with his Friend, whether he loved him or no, and upon every little Occasion were ready to think he doth not, how would this disrelish their Society together, tho' truly loving each other? The far more excellent way, and more pleasing both to ourselves and to God, were to resolve on humble Trust, Reverence and Confidence, most afraid to offend, delighting to walk in his Ways, loving him and his Will in all, and then resting persuaded of his Love, tho' he chastise us; and even, tho' we offend him, and see our Offences in our Chastisements, yet he is good, plenteous in Redemption, ready to forgive. Therefore let *Israel* trust and hope, let my Soul roll itself on him, and adventure there all its Weight; he bears greater Matters, upholding the Frame of Heaven and Earth, and is not troubled nor burdened with it.

The Heart of a Man is not sufficient for Self-support, therefore naturally it seeks out some other thing to lean and rest itself on. The Unhappiness is, for the most part, that it seeks to Things below itself; these being both so mean and so uncertain, cannot be a firm and certain Stay to it. These Things are not fixed themselves, how can they then fix the Heart? Can a Man have firm Footing on a Quagmire or moving Sands? Therefore Men are forced in these Things still to shift their Seat, and seek about from one to another, still rolling and unsettled. The Believer only hath this Advantage, he hath a Rest high enough and sure enough, out of the Reach of all Hazards. *His Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*

The Basis of this Happiness is, *He trusteth on the Lord.*

Lord. So the *Heart is fixed*; and so fixed, it fears no ill Tidings.

This *Trust* is grounded on the Word of God, revealing the Power and All-sufficiency of God, and withal his Goodness, his Offer of himself to be the Stay of Souls, commanding us to rest on him. People wait on I know not what Persuasions and *Assurances*, but I know no other to build Faith on, but the *Word of Promise*, the Truth and Faithfulness of God opened up, his Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, as the Stay of all these, that renouncing all other Props, will venture on it; and lay all upon him. He that believes, sets to his Seal, that God is true; and so he is sealed for God, his Portion and Interest secured. *Isa. vii. 9. If you will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.*

This is the Way to have Peace and Assurance, which many look for first, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee, Isa. xxvi. 3.* So here, the Heart is fixed by *trusting*.

Seek then clearer Apprehensions of the Faithfulness and Goodness of God, Hearts more enlarged in the Notion of free Grace, and the absolute Trust due to it; thus shall they be more establish'd and fix'd in all the Rollings and Changes of the World.

Heart fixed.] Or *prepared*, ready, prest, and in Arms for all Services; resolved not to give back, able to meet all Adventures, and stand its Ground. God is unchangeable; and therefore Faith is invincible that sets the Heart on him, fastens it there on the Rock of Eternity: Then let the Winds blow, and Storms rise, it cares not.

This firm and close cleaving unto God, hath in it of the Affection, which is inseparable from this Trust, Love with *Faith*; and so a Hatred of all Ways and Thoughts that alienate and estrange from God, that remove and unsettle the Heart. The holiest, wariest Heart is surely the most believing and fixed Heart; a Believer will adventure on any one Way of Sin,

he shall find that will unfix him, and shake his Confidence, more than ten thousand Hazards and Assaults from without. These are so far from moving that they settle and fix the Heart commonly more, cause it to cleave the closer and nearer unto God, but sinful Liberty breeds Inquiet, and disturbs all. Where Sin is, there will be a Storm; the Wind within the Bowels of the Earth makes the Earthquake.

Would you be quiet, and have Peace within in troublous Times, keep near unto God, beware of any thing that may interpose betwixt you and your Confidence. *It is good for me* (says the *Psalmist*) *to be near God*; not only to draw near, but to keep near, to cleave to him, and dwell in him, so the Word. Oh the sweet Calm of such a Soul amidst all Storms; thus once trusting and fixed, then no more Fear, not afraid of *evil Tidings*, not of an *Ill-bearing*. Whatsoever Sound is terrible in the Ear of Men, the Noise of War, News of Death, even the Sound of the Trumpet in the last Judgment, he hears all this undisquieted.

Nothing is unexpected, being once fixed on God, then the Heart may put Cases to itself, and suppose all things imaginable, the most terrible, and look on them; not troubled before Trouble with dark and dismal Apprehensions, but satisfied in a quiet unmoved Expectation of the hardest things. Whatsoever is though particularly not thought on before, yet the Heart is not afraid of the News of it, because *trusting on the Lord*; nothing can shake that Foundation, nor dissolve that Union, therefore no Fear. Yea, this Assurance stays the Heart in all things, how strange and unforeseen soever to it, "all is foreseen to my God, on whom I trust, yea, all is contrived and ordered by him." This is the impregnable Fort of a Soul, "all is at the Disposal of my God, my Father rules all, need I fear?"

Every one trusts to somewhat; as for Honour, Esteem, and Popularity, they are airy vain things.

but Riches seem a more solid Work and Fence, yet they are but a Tower in Conceit, not really, *Prov. xviii. 11. The rich Man's Wealth is his strong City, and as an high Wall in his own Conceit, but the Name of the Lord is a strong Tower indeed, Ver. 10.* This is the thing all seek, some fence and fixing. Here it is, we call you not to Vexation and Turmoil, but from it; and as St. Paul said, *Acts xvii. Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.* Ye blindly and fruitlessly seek after the *Shew*. The true aiming at this fixedness of Mind will make that, tho' they fall short, yet by the Way they will light on very pretty things that have some Virtue in them, as they that seek the Philosopher's Stone: But the Believer hath the *thing*, the Secret itself of Tranquillity and Joy, and this turns all into Gold, their Iron Chains into a Crown of Gold, *2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.*

This is the blest and safe Estate of Believers. Who can think they have a sad heavy Life? Oh! it is the only lightsome, sweet, chearful Condition in the World. The rest of Men are poor, rolling, unstayed things, every Report shaking them, as the Leaves of Trees are shaken with the Wind, *Isa. vii. yea, lighter than so, as the Chaff that the Wind drives to and fro at its Pleasure, Psal. i.* Would Men but reflect and look in upon their own Hearts, it is a Wonder what vain childish things they most would find there. Glad and sorry at things as light as the Toys of Children, at which they laugh and cry in a Breath. How easily puffed up with a Thing or Word that pleaseth us! Bladder like, swelled with a little Air, and it shrinks in again in Discouragements and Fear upon the Touch of a Needle's Point, which gives that Air some Vent.

What is the Life of the greatest Part but a continual Tossing betwixt vain Hopes and Fears, all their Days spent in these? Oh! how vain a Thing is a Man even in his best Estate, while he is nothing but himself! his Heart not united and fixed on God, disquieted in vain, how small a thing will do it! He

need no other but his own Heart, it may prove Disquietment enough to itself, his Thoughts are his Tormentors.

I know some Men are, by a stronger Understanding and moral Principles, somewhat raised above the Vulgar, and speak big of a Constancy of Mind; but these are but Flourishes, an acted Bravery. Somewhat there may be that will hold out in some Trials, but far short of this Fixedness of Faith. Troubles may so multiply, as to drive them at length from their Posture, and come on so thick, with such violent Blows, as will smite them out of their artificial Guard, disorder all their *Seneca* and *Epicurus*, and all their own calm Thoughts and high Resolves. The Approach of Death, though they make a good Mien, and set the best Face on it; or if not, yet some kind of Terror may seize on their Spirits, which they are not able to shift off. But the Soul trusting on God is prepared for all, not only for the Calamities of War, Pestilence, Famine, Poverty, or Death, but in the saddest Apprehensions of Soul, above Hope, believes under Hope, even in the darkest Night, casts Anchor in God, reposes on him when he sees no Light, *Isa. l. 10. Yea, though he slay me, says Job, yet will I trust on him;* “not only though I dy, but “though he slay me; when I see his Hand lift up to “destroy me, yet from that same Hand will I look “for Salvation.”

My Brethren, my Desire is to stir in your Hearts an Ambition after this blest Estate of the Godly that fear the Lord, and trust on him, and so fear no other thing. The common Revolutions and Changes of the World, and those that in these late times we ourselves have seen, and the Likelihood of more and greater coming on, seem dreadful to weak Minds. But let these persuade us the more to prize and seek this fixed unaffrighted Station; no fixing but here where we make a Virtue of Necessity.

Oh! that you would be perswaded to break off from the vile Ways of Sin, that embase the Soul and fill

Fill it full of Terrors, and disengage them from the Vanities of this World to take up in God, to live in him wholly, to cleave to, and depend on him, to esteem nothing beside him. Excellent was the Answer of that holy Man to the Emperor, first essaying him with large Proffers of Honour and Riches, to draw him from Christ. *Offer these things* (says he) *to Children, I regard them not.* Then after he tried to terrify him with threatening. *Threaten* (says he) *your effeminate Courtiers, I fear none of these things.*

Seek to have your Hearts established on him by the Faith of *eternal Life*, and then it will be asham'd to distrust him in any other Thing. Yea, truly, you will not much regard, nor be careful for other Things how they be. 'Twill be all one, the better and worse of this *Moment*; the Things of it, even the greatest, being both in themselves so little and worthless, and of so short Continuance.

Well chuse you; but all reckon'd and examin'd, I had rather be the poorest Believer than the greatest King on Earth. How small a Commotion, small in its Beginning, may prove the overturning of the greatest Kingdom. But the Believer is Heir to a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. The mightiest and most victorious Prince, that hath not only lost nothing, but hath been gaining new Conquests all his Days, is stopt by a small Distemper in the middle of his Course: He returns to his Dust, then his vast Designs fall to nothing, *in that very Day his Thoughts perish.* But the Believer, in that very Day, is sent to the Possession of his Crown, that is his Coronation-day; all his Thoughts are accomplish'd.

How can you affright him? Bring him Word, his Estate is ruined; yet *my Inheritance is safe*, says he. Your Wife, or Child, or dear Friend, is dead; yet *my Father lives.* You yourself must die; well then, *I go home to my Father, and to my Inheritance.*

For the publick Troubles of the Church, doubtless it is both a most pious and generous Temper, to be more deeply affected for these than for all our private

vate ones; and to resent common Calamities of any People, but especially of God's own People, hath been the Character of Men near unto him. Observe the pathetical Strains of the Prophets bewailing, when they foretel the Desolation even of foreign Kingdoms, much more for the Lord's chosen People, still mindful of *Sion*, and mournful for her Distresses, *Jer. ix. 1.* and the whole Book of *Lamentations*, *Psal. cxxxvii.* *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem.* Pious Spirits are always publick, as even brave Heathens for the Commonwealth: So he, in that of *Horace* *. *Little regarding himself, but much solicitous for the Publick.* Yet even in this, with much Compassion, there is a Calm in a Believer's Mind, (how these agree, none can tell, but they that feel it) he finds amidst all hard News, yet still a *fixed Heart trusting*, satisfied in this, that Deliverance shall come in due time, *Psal. cii. 13.* and that in those Judgments that are inflicted, Man shall be humbled and God exalted, *Isa. ii. 11.* and *v. 15, 16.* and that in all Tumults and Changes, and Subversions of States, still *his Throne is fixed*, and with that the Believer's Heart likewise, *Psal. xciii.* So *Psal. xxix. 10.* *The Lord sitteth upon the Flood: Yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.* Or, *sat in the Flood*, possibly referring to the general Deluge, yet that then God sat quiet, and still *sitteth King for ever.* He steer'd the Ark, and still guides his Church through all. So *Psal. xli.* throughout that whole *Psalm.* In all Commotions, the Kingdom of Christ shall be spreading and growing, and the Close of all shall be full Victory on his Side, and that's sufficient.

Of this a singular Example is in *Job*, who was not daunted with so many Ill-hearings, but stood as an unmov'd Rock amidst the Winds and Waves †.

In

* *Invenit insomni volventem publica curâ
Fata virum, casusque urbis, cunctisque timentem,
Securumque sui.*

† *Ille velut rupes immota manebat.*

In this Condition there is so much Sweetness, that if known, a Man might suspect himself rather selfishly taken with it, than purely loving God. Such Joy in believing, or at least, such Peace, such a serene Calmness, is in no other thing in this World. Nothing without or within a Man to be named to this of trusting on his *Goodness*, he is God, and on his *Faithfulness*, giving his Promise for thy Warrant. He commands thee to roll thyself on him. The holy Soul still trusts in the darkest Apprehensions. If it is suggested *thou art a Reprobate*, yet will the Soul say, "I will see the utmost, and hang by the Hold I have, till I feel myself really cast off, and will not willingly fall off. If I must be separated from him, he shall do it himself, he shall shake me off while I would cleave to him. Yea, to the utmost I will look for Mercy, and will hope better; tho' I found him shaking me off, yet will I think he will not do it." It is good to seek after all possible Assurance, but not to fret at the Want of it; for even without these Assurances, which some Christians hang too much upon, there is in simple Trust and Reliance on God, and in a Desire to walk in his Ways, such a Fort of Peace, as all the Assaults in the World are not able to make a Breach in. And to this add that unspeakable Delight in walking in his Fear, joined with this Trust. The noble Ambition of pleasing him, makes one careless of pleasing or displeasing all the World. Besides, the Delight in his Commandments, so pure, so just a Law, Holiness, Victory over Lusts, and Temperance, hath a Sweetness in it that presently pays itself, because his Will.

'Tis the godly Man alone, who by this fixed Consideration in God, looks the grim Visage of Death in the Face with an unappal'd Mind. He damps all the Joys, and defeats all the Hopes of the most prosperous, proudest and wisest Worldlings.* As he said, when shot, *Avocâsti ab optima demonstratione*. It spoils all their Figures and fine Devices. But *to the righteous there is Hope in his Death*. He goes through

* *Archimedes.*

it without Fear, without *Caligula's Quò vadis*. Tho' Riches, Honours, and all the Glories of this World, are with a Man, yet he fears, yea he fears thee more for these, because here they must end. But the good Man looks Death out of Countenance, in the Words of *David, Tho' I walk through the Valley and Shadow of Death, yet will I fear no Evil, for thou art with me.*

S E R M O N XIII.

MATTH. XIII. 3.

And he spake many Things unto them in Parables, saying, Behold a Sower went forth to sow, &c.

THE rich Bounty of God hath furnish'd our natural Life, not barely for strict Necessity, but with great Abundance, many Kinds of Beasts, and Fowls, and Fishes, and Herbs, and Fruits, has he provided for the Use of Man. Thus our spiritual Life likewise is supported with a Variety; the Word, the Food of it, hath not only all necessary Truths once simply set down, but a great Variety of Doctrine, for our more abundant Instruction and Consolation. Amongst the rest, this way of Similitudes hath a notable Commixture of Profit and Delight.

Parables, not unfolded and understood, are a Veil (as here) to the Multitude, and in that are a great Judgment, as *Isa. vi. 9.* cited here; but when cleared and made transparent, then they are a Glass to behold Divine Things in, more commodiously and suitably to our way. All Things are big with such Resemblances, but they require the dextrous Hand of an active Spirit to bring them forth. This way, besides other Advantages, is much grac'd and commended by our Saviour's frequent Use of it.

That here is fitted to the Occasion; Multitudes coming to hear him, and many not a whit the better: He instructs us in this Point, the great Difference between the different Hearts of Men; so that the same Word hath very different Success in them.

In this Parable we shall consider these three Things: (1.) *The Nature of the Word in itself.* (2.) *The Sameness and Commonness of the Dispensation.* (3.) *The Difference of the Operation and Production.*

The Word *Seed* hath in it a productive Virtue to bring forth Fruit, according to its Kind, that is, the Fruit of a *new Life*; not only a new Habitude and Fashion of Life without, but a *new Nature*, a new Kind of Life within, new Thoughts, a new Estimate of Things, new Delights and Actions. When the Word reveals God, his Greatness and Holiness, then it begets pious Fear and Reverence, and Study of Conformity to him; When it reveals his Goodness and Mercy, it works Love and Confidence: When it holds up in our View Christ crucified, it crucifies the Soul to the World, and the World to it: When it represents these rich Things laid up for us, that blest Inheritance of the Saints, then it makes all the Lustre of this World vanish, shews how poor it is, weans and calls off the Heart from them, raising it to these higher Hopes, and sets it on the Project of a Crown; and so is a Seed of noble Thoughts, and of a suitable Behaviour in a Christian, as in the Exposition of this Parable, 'tis called the *Word of the Kingdom*.

Seed, an *immortal Seed*, as St. Peter calls it, springing up to no less than an eternal Life.

This teaches us, 1. Highly to esteem the great Goodness of God to these Places and Times, that were most blest with it. *Psal. cxlvii. 19. 20. He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgment unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them.*

2. That the same Dispensation is to be preach'd indifferently to all where it comes, as far as the Sound can

can reach. And thus it was very much extended in the first promulgating of the Gospel; *their Sound went out through all the Earth*, as the Apostle allusively applies that of the *Psalmist*.

3. This teaches also Ministers liberally to sow this Seed at all Times, according to that, *Ecc. xi. 6. In the Morning sow thy Seed, and in the Evening withhold not thine Hand*, &c. praying earnestly to him, that is the Lord not only of the Harvest, but of the Seed-time, and of this *Seed* to make it fruitful; this is his peculiar Work. So the Apostle acknowledges, *1 Cor. iii. 6. I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the Increase*.

4. Hence we also learn the Success to be very different. This is most evident in Men; One cast into the Mould and Fashion of the Word, and so moulded and fashioned by it; another no whit changed; one Heart melting before it, another still hardened under it.

So then, this is not all, to have the Word and hear it, as if that would serve turn and save us, as we commonly fancy, *The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord*. Multitudes under the continual Sound of the Word, yet remain lifeless and fruitless, and die in their Sins; therefore we must enquire and examine strictly, what becomes of it, how it works, what it brings forth; and for this very End this Parable declares so many are fruitless. We need not press them, they are three to one here; yea, that were too narrow, the Odds is far greater, for these are but the Kinds of unfruitful Grounds, and under each of the huge Multitudes of Individuals, so that there may be a hundred to one, and it is to be feared, in many Congregations, it is more than so.

Whence is then the Difference? Not from the Seed, that is the same to all; not from the Sower neither, for though these be divers, and of different Abilities, yet it hangs little or nothing on that. Indeed, he is the fittest to preach that is himself most like his Message, and comes forth not only with a Handful of this

Seed in his Hand, but with Store of it in his Heart, the Word *dwelling richly in him*; yet howsoever, the Seed he sows, being this Word of Life, depends not on his Qualifications in any Kind, either of common Gifts, or special Grace. People mistake this much, and it is a carnal Conceit to hang on the Advantages of the Minister, or to eye that much. The sure way is to look up to God, and to look into thine own Heart. An unchanged unsoftned Heart, as an evil Soil, disappoints the Fruit. What though sown by a weak Hand, yea, possibly a foul one, yet if received in a clean and honest Heart, it will fructify much. There is in the World a needless and prejudicial differencing of Men, out of which People will not come for all we can say.

The first bad Ground is a *High-way*. Now we have a Commentary here, whence we may not, nor will not depart, it is authentick and full, *Ver. 19. they that understand not*. Gross brutish Spirits, that perceive not what is said, are as if they were not there, sit like Blocks, one Log of Wood upon another, as he said *. This is our brutish Multitude, what pity is it to see so many, such as have not so much as a natural Apprehension of spiritual Truths? The *common Road* of all Passengers, of all Kind of foolish, brutish Thoughts, seeking nothing but how to live, and yet know not to what End, have no Design, trivial, *High-way* Hearts, all Temptations pass at their Pleasure, *profane* as *Esau*, which some Criticks draw from a Word signifying the *Threshold*, the outer Step that every foul Foot treads on.

These retain nothing, there is no Hazard of that, and yet the Enemy of Souls, to make all sure, lest peradventure some Word might take Root unawares, some Grain of this Seed, he is busy to pick it away; to take them off from all Reflexion, all serious Thoughts, or the Remembrance of any thing spoken to them. And if any common Word is remembred, yet it doth no Good, for that is troden down as the rest,

* *Lapis super lapidem in theatro.*

rest, though the most is *picked up*, because it lies on the Road. So exprest by St. Mark iv. 4.

The second is *stony Ground*. Hard Hearts, not softened and made penetrable, to receive in deeply this ingrafted Word with Meekness, with humble Yieldance and Submission to it, the *Rocks*. Yet in these there is often some receiving of it, and a little slender Moisture above them, which the warm Air may make spring up a little; they *receive with Joy*, have a little present Delight in it, are moved and taken with the Sermon, possibly to the shedding of some Tears, but the Misery is, there is a Want of Depth of Earth, it sinks not.

No Wonder if there is some present Delight in these, therefore the *Word of the Kingdom*, especially if skilfully and sensibly delivered by some more able Speaker, pleases. Let it be but a Fancy, yet it is a fine pleasant one: Such Love as the Son of God to dy for Sinners; such a rich Purchase made as a Kingdom; such Glory and Sweetness, Therefore the Description of the new *Jerusalem*, *Apoc. xxi.* suppose it be but a Dream, or one of the Visions of the Night, yet it is] passing fine; it must needs please a Mind that heeds what is said of it. There is a *natural* Delight in spiritual Things, and thus the Word of the Prophet, as the Lord tells him, was as a Minstrel's Voice, a fine Song so long as it lasts, but dies out in the Air; it may be, the Relish and Air of it will remain a while in the Imagination, but not long, even that wears out, and is forgot. So here it is *heard with Joy*, and some is *springing up* presently: They commend it, and it may be, repeat some Passages, yea, possibly desire to be like it, to have such and such Graces as are recommended, and upon that think they have them, are presently good Christians in their own Conceit, and to Appearance some Change is wrought, and it appears to be all that it is. But it is not deep enough, they talk possibly too much more than those whose Hearts receive it more deeply; there it lies hid longer, and little is heard of it.

Others

Others may think it is lost, and possibly themselves do not perceive that it is there, they are exercised and humbled at it, and find no Good in their own Hearts; yet there it is hid, as *David* says, *Thy Word have I hid in my Heart*. And as Seed in a Manner lies in a silent smothering Way, yet it is in order to be fructifying, and to the reviving of it, it will spring up in time, and be *fruitful* in its Season, with *patience*, as *St. Luke* hath it of the good Ground; not so suddenly, but much more surely and solidly.

But the most are present, Mushroom Christians, soon ripe, soon rotten; the Seed goes never deep, it springs up indeed, but any thing blasts and withers. Little Root in some, if Trials arise, either the Heat of *Persecution* without, or a *Temptation* within; this sudden Spring-seed can stand before neither.

Oh rocky Hearts! How shallow, shallow, are the impressions of divine Things upon you? Religion goes never farther than the upper Surface of your Hearts, few deep Thoughts of God, and of Jesus Christ, and the Things of the World to come; all are but slight and transient Glances.

The third is *thorny Ground*. This relates to the Cares and Pleasures, and all the Interests of this Life. See *St. Mark* iv. 1. and *St. Luke* viii. 5. All these together are the *Thorns*, and these grow in Hearts that do more deeply receive the Seed, and send it forth, and spring up more hopefully than either of the other two, and yet choak it. Oh! the Pity.

Many are thus almost at Heaven, so much Desire of Renovation, and some Endeavours after it, and yet the Thorns prevail. Miserable Thorns! The base things of a perishing Life drawing away the strength of Affections, sucking the Sap of the Soul. Our other Seed and Harvest, our Corn and Hay, our Shops and Ships, our Tradings and Bargains, our Suits and Pretensions for Places and Employments of Gain or Credit, Husband, and Wife, and Children, and House, and Train, our Feastings and Entertainments, and other Pleasures of Sense, our Civilities

lities and Compliments; and a World of those in all the World are these *Thorns*, and they overspread all *The Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life.*

And for how long is all the Advantage and Delight of these? Alas! that so poor things should prejudice us of the rich and blessed Increase of this divine Seed.

The last is *good Ground.* A good and honest Heart, not much Fineness here, not many Questions and Disputes, but honest Simplicity, sweet Sincerity, that is all, a humble single Desire to eye, and to do the Will of God, and this from Love to himself. This makes the Soul abound in the *Fruits* of Holiness, receiving the Word as the Ground of it; different Degrees there are indeed, some *thirty*, some *sixty*, and some *an hundred Fold*, yet the lowest aiming at the highest, not resting satisfied; yet growing more fruitful, if thirty last Year, desiring to bring forth sixty this.

This is the great Point, we ought to examine in, for much is sown, and little brought forth. Our God hath done much for us, (what more could be done?) yet when Grapes were expected, wild Grapes are produced. What becomes of all? Who grows to be more spiritual, more humble and meek, more like Christ, more self-denying, fuller of Love to God, and one to another? Some, but alas! few. All the Land is *sown*, and that plentifully, with the good Seed: But what *comes* for the most Part, Cockle and no Grain, *Infelix lolium.*

We would do all other things to Purpose, and not willingly lose our End; nor trade and gain nothing buy and sell, and live by the Loss; not plow and sow, and reap nothing; how sensibly do we feel our ill Year? And shall *this* alone be lost Labour, that well improved, were worth all the rest? Oh! how much more worth than all? Shall we only do the greatest Business to the least Purpose? Behold yourselves, what do we here? why come we here

if we still remain as proud and passionate, and as self-willed as before, what will all great Bargains, and good Years, and full Barns, avail within a while? That Word, *Thou Fool, this Night shall they fetch away thy Soul*, how terrible will it be?

We think we are wise in not losing our Labour in other things? why, it is all lost, even where most gained. What amounts it to, cast up? *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit* is the total Sum. And in all our Projecting and Bussling, what do we but *sow the Wind*, and reap *the Whirl-wind*? sow *Vanity*, and reap *Vexation*.

This Seed alone being fruitful, makes rich and happy, springs up to *eternal Life*. Oh that we were wise, and that we would at length learn to bear every Sermon as on the utmost Edge of Time, at the very brink of Eternity. For any thing we know for ourselves, of any of us it may be really so; however, it is wise and safe to do as if it were so. Will you be perswaded of this? It were a happy Sermon if it could prevail, for the more fruitful hearing of all the rest henceforward. We have lost too much of our little Time; and thus, with the Apostle, *I beseech you, I beseech you, receive not the Grace of God in vain*.

Now that you may be fruitful, examine well your own Hearts, pluck up, weed out, for there are still Thorns. Some will grow, but he is the happiest Man that hath the sharpest Eye, and the busiest Hand, spying them out, and plucking them up. *Take heed how you bear*, think it not so easy a Matter. *Plow up, and sow not among Thorns*, Jer. iv.

And above all pray, pray before, after, and in hearing. Dart up Desires to God, he is the Lord of the Harvest, whose Influence doth all. The Difference of the Soil makes indeed the Difference of Success, but the Lord hath the Privilege of bettering the Soil. He that framed the Heart, changes it when and how he will. There is a Curse on all Grounds naturally, that fell on the Earth for Man's Sake, but fell more on the Ground of Man's own

Heart within him : *Thorns and Briars shalt thou bring forth.* Now it is he that denounced that Curse, that alone hath Power to remove it; he is both the Sovereign Owner of the Seed, and Changer of the Soil, turns a Wilderness into *Carmel* by his Spirit; and no Ground, no Heart, can be good till he change it.

And being changed, much Care must be had still of manuring, for still that is in it, that will bring forth many Weeds, is a Mother to them, and but a Step-mother to this Seed. Therefore,

Consider it, if you think this concerns you; *be that hath an Ear to hear*, as our Saviour closes, *let him hear.* The Lord apply your Hearts to this Work; and though Discouragements arise without, or within, and little present Fruit appear, but Corruption is rather stronger and greater, yet watch and pray; wait on, it shall be better, this Fruit is to be brought forth *with Patience*, as St. *Luke* hath it. And this *Seed*, this *Word*, the Lord calls by that very Name, the very *Word of his Patience.* Keep it, hide it in thy Heart, and in due time it shall spring up. And this Patience shall be put to it but for a little while, the Day of Harvest is at Hand, when all in any Measure fruitful in Grace shall be gathered into Glory.

S E R M O N XIV.

2 COR. VII. 1.

Having therefore these Promises (dearly beloved) let us cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.

IT is a thing both of unspeakable Sweetness and Usefulness for a Christian, often to consider the Excellency of that Estate to which he is called. It cannot fail to put him upon very high Resolutions, and carry him on in the divine Ambition of behaving daily more suitably to his high Calling and Hopes. Therefore, these are often set before Christians in the Scripture, and are prest here by the Apostle upon a particular Occasion of the Avoidance of near Combinations with Unbelievers. He mentions some choice *Promises* that God makes to his own People, and of their *near Relation* to, and *Communion* with himself. And upon these he enlarges and raises the Exhortation to the universal Endeavour of all Holiness, and that as aiming at the very Top and high Degree of it.

In the Words are, 1. The Thing to which he would perswade. 2. The Motive. The Thing, Holiness in its full Extension and Intension, *Purging ourselves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, and perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.*

The purging out of Filthiness, and perfecting of Holiness, expresses those two Parts of renewing Grace, *Mortification* and *Vivification*, as usually they are distinguish'd. But I conceive they are not so truly different Parts, as a different Notion of the same thing, the Decrease of Sin, and Increase of Grace being truly one thing, as the dispelling of Darkness, and augmenting of Light. So here the one is rendred, as

the necessary Result, yea, as the equivalent of the other; the same thing indeed, *Purging from Filthiness*, and in so doing *perfecting Holiness*; *perfecting Holiness*, and in so doing *purging from Filthiness*. That *Perfection*, by which is meant a growing progressive Advance towards Perfection.

The Words without straining give us as it were the several Dimensions of Holiness, The *Breadth*, purging all Filthiness; the *Length*, parallel to Man's Composure, running all along through his Soul and Body, — purging Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit; the *Height*, perfecting Holiness; the *Depth*, that which is the Bottom whence it rises up, — a deep Impress of the Fear of God. *Perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*.

Cleanse ourselves] It is the Lord that is the Sanctifier of his People, he *purges away their Dross and Tin*, he *pours clean Water*, according to his Promises, yet doth he call to us to cleanse ourselves, even having such Promises, *Let us cleanse ourselves*. He puts a new Life into us, and causes us to act, and excites us to excite it, and call it up to act in the Progress of Sanctification. Men are strangely inclined to a perverse Construction of Things, tell them that we are to act and work, and give Diligence, then they would fancy a doing in their own Strength, and be their own Saviours. Again, tell them that God works all our Works in us, and for us, then they would take the Ease of doing nothing; if they cannot have the Praise of doing all, they will sit still with folded Hands, and use no Diligence at all. But this is the corrupt Logick of the Flesh, its base Sophistry. The Apostle reasons just contrary, *Phil. ii. 12. It is God that worketh in us, both to will and do. Therefore*, would a carnal Heart say, *we need not work*, or at least, may work very carelessly. But he infers, *Therefore let us work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, i. e. in the more humble Obedience to God, and Dependence on him, not ob-

structing

structing the Influences of his Grace, and by Sloth, and Negligence provoking him to withdraw or abate it. Certainly many in whom there is *Truth* of Grace, are kept low in the *Growth* of it, by their own Slothfulness, sitting still, and not bestirring themselves, and exercising the proper Actions of that spiritual Life, by which it is entertained and advanced

From all Filthiness] All kind of sinful Pollutions. Not as Men commonly do reform *some* things, and take to themselves Dispensations in *others*, at least in some *one* peculiar Sin, their *Mistress* and their *Herodias*, their *Dalilah*: No parting with that; yea, they rather forego many other things, as a Kind of Composition for the retaining of that.

Of Flesh and Spirit] The *whole* Man must be purified and consecrated to God, not only refined from the gross outward Acts of Sin, but from the inward Affection to it, and Motions of it, that so the Heart go not after it, (*Psal. cxxxi.*) which under Restraints of outward committing Sin, it may do, and very often does. As the *Israelites* *lusted after the Flesh Pots*, their Hearts remained in *Egypt* still, though their Bodies were brought out. This is then to be done, *viz.* Affection to Sin to be purged out. That is, to cleanse the *Ground*, not only to lop off the Branches, but to dig about, and loosen and pluck up the Root. Though still Fibres of it will stick, yet we ought still to be finding them out, and plucking them up.

Further, these not only of the inner Part of all Sins, but of some Sins that are most or wholly inward, that hang not so much on the Body, nor are acted by it, those *Filthinesses of the Spirit* that are less discerned than those of the *Flesh*: and as more hardly discerned, so when discerned, more hardly purged out, *Pride, Self-love, Unbelief, Curiosity, &c.* which though more retired and refined Sins, yet are Pollutions and Defilements, yea of the worst Sort, as being more spiritual, are *Filthinesses of the Spirit*. *Flesh-*

ly Pollutions are things of which the Devils are not capable in themselves, though they excite Men to them, and so they are called unclean Spirits. But the highest rank of Sins, are those that are properly *spiritual Wickednesses*. These in Men are the chief Strengths of *Satan*, the inner Works of these Forts and *Strongholds*, 2 Cor. x. 4. Many that are not much tempted to the common gross Sensualities, have possibly (though an Inclination to them, yet) a Kind of Disdain; and, through Education and Morality, and Strength of Reason, with somewhat of natural Conscience, are carried above them; who yet have many of these *Heights*, those lofty *Imaginations* that rise against God, and the Obedience of Christ, all which must be demolished.

Perfecting Holiness.] Not content with low Measures, so much as keeps from Hell, but aspiring towards Perfection; aiming high at Self victory, Self-denial, and the Love of God, purer and hotter, as a Fire growing and flaming up, and consuming the Earth. Though Men fall short of their Aim, yet it is good to aim high, they shall shoot so much the higher, though not full so high as they aim. Thus we ought to be setting the State of Perfection in our Eye, resolving not to rest content below that, and to come as near it as we can, even before we come at it, *Phil.* iii. 11, 12. This is to act as one that hath such a Hope, such a State in view, and is still advancing towards it.

In the Fear of God.] No working but on firm Ground, no solid Endeavours in Holiness where it is not founded in a deep Heart, a Reverence of God, a Desire to please him and to be like him, which springs from Love.

This most Men are either Strangers to wholly, or are but slight and shallow in it, and therefore make so little true Progress in Holiness.

Then there is the Motive, *Having these Promises*; being called to so fair an Estate, so excellent a Condition, to be the People, yea, the Sons and Daughters

ters of God. Therefore they are called to the *coming forth* from *Babel*, and the separating themselves from Sin, and purging it out. Holiness is his Image in his Children, the more of it, the more suitable to that blessed Relation and Dignity, and the firmer are the Hopes of the Inheritance of Glory.

Consider Sin as a Filthiness, hate it. Oh how ugly and vile is Lust, how deformed is swelling Pride, and all Sin is an Aversion from God, a casting the noble Soul into the Mire, the defacing all its Beauty. Turning to present Things, it pollutes itself with them, that he who was *clad in Scarlet*, *embraces the Dunghill*, as *Jeremy* in another Sense laments.

Purity of Things is an *Unmixture* and *Simplicity* corresponding with their own Being; and so is the Soul when elevated above the Earth, and Sense, and united unto God, contemplating him, and delighting in him, all inordinate Bent to the Creatures, or to itself, (which is the first and main Disorder) doth defile and debase it. And the more it is sublim'd and freed from itself, the purer and more heavenly it grows, and partakes the more of God, and resembles him the more.

This then to be our main Study, first to search out our Iniquities, the particular Defilements of our Nature, not only gross Filthinesses, Drunkenness, Lasciviousness, &c. but our Love of this Earth, or of *Air* or Vanity of Mind, our Self-will and Self-seeking. Most, even of Christians, are short-sighted in their own secret Evils, the *Filthinesses of Spirit* especially, and use little Diligence in this Enquiry. They do not seek Light from God, to go in before him, and to lead them into themselves, as the Prophet had in the Discovery of Idolatries at *Jerusalem*. Oh! that we could once see what Heaps of Abominations lie hid in us, one behind another.

Then having search'd out, we must follow on to purge out; not to pass over, nor spare any, but to delight most in casting out the best beloved Sin, the choicest

choicest Idol, that hath had most of our Service and Sacrifices, to make room for Jesus Christ.

And never cease in this Work, for still there is need of more purging, one Day's Work in this disposes for and engages to a further, to the next; for as Sin is purged out, Light comes in, and more clear Discoveries are made of remaining Pollutions. So then still there must be Progress, less of the World, and more of God in the Heart every Day. Oh! this is a sweet Course of Life, what Gain, what Preferment, to be compared to it?

And in this 'tis good to have our Ambition growing; the higher we rise, to aspire still the higher, looking farther than before, even toward the Perfection of Holiness. It is not much we can here attain to, but sure, 'tis commonly far less than we might; we improve not our Condition and Advantages as we might do. The World is busy driving forwards their Designs. Men of Spirit are animated, both by better and worse Success: If any thing miscarry, it sets them on the more eagerly to make it up, in the right Management of some other Design; and when they prosper in one thing, that enables and encourages them to attempt further. Shall all things seem worth our Pains? Are only Grace and Glory so cheap in our Account, that the least Diligence of all goes that Way? Oh, strange Delusion!

Now our cleansing is to be managed by all holy Means: *Word and Sacrament* more wisely and spiritually used than commonly with us; and *private Prayer*, that purifies and elevates the Soul, takes it up into the Mount, and makes it shine; and particularly supplicating for the Spirit of Holiness, and Victory over Sin, is not in vain, it obtains its Desire of God, the Soul becoming that which it is fixedly set upon: *Holy Resolution*, Christians much wanting in this, faint and loose in their Purposes; the *Consideration of Divine Truths*, the Mysteries of the Kingdom, the Hope of Christians, yea, rich and great Promises, that is particularly here the Motive. These

are all the Means, holy Means they are, as their End is the Perfection of Holiness.

Having these Promises.] Now consider whether it is better to be the Slaves of Satan, or the Sons of God; measure Delight in God with the low base Pleasures of Sense. *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God;* these gradually go on together, and are perfected together.

Why then is there such an invincible Love of Sin in the Hearts of Men? At least, why so little Love of Holiness, and Endeavour after it, so mean Thoughts of it, as a Thing either indecent or unpleasant, when 'tis the only noble and the only delightful Thing in the World? The Soul by other Things is drawn below itself, but by Holiness it is raised above itself, and made divine. Pleasures of Sin for a Season, the Pleasure of a Moment exchanged for those of Eternity. But even in the mean time, in this Season, the Soul is fed with Communion with God, one Hour of which is more worth than the longest Life of the highest of the World's Delights.

S E R M O N XV.

PSAL. CXIX. 32.

I will run the Way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my Heart.

TO desire Ease and Happiness, under a general Representation of it, is a Thing of more easy and general Persuasion. There is somewhat in Nature to help the Argument, but to find Beauty in, and be taken with the very *Way* of Holiness that leads to it, is more rare, and depends on a higher Principle. *Self-love* inclines a Man to desire the

the *Rest of Love*, but to love and desire *the Labour of Love*, is Love of a higher and purer Strain. To delight, and be chearful in Obedience, argues much Love as the Spring of it. That is the Thing the holy Psalmist doth so plentifully express in this Psalm, and he is still desiring more of that sweet and lively Affection that might make him yet more abundant in Action. Thus here, *I will run, &c.* He presents his Desire and Purpose together, "The more of this
" Grace thou bestowest on me, the more Service
" shall I be able to do thee."

This is the Top of his Ambition, while others are seeking to enlarge their Barns, their Lands, or Estates, or Titles, Kings to enlarge their Territories or Authority, to incroach on neighbouring Kingdoms, or be more absolute in their own; instead of all such *Enlargements*, this is *David's* great Desire, *An enlarged Heart to run the Way of God's Commandments.*

And these *other* (how big soever they sound) are poor narrow Desires; this *one* is larger and higher than them all, and gives Evidence of a Heart already large: But as it is miserable in *those*, 'tis happy in *this*, *Much would still have more.*

Let others seek more *Money*, or more *Honour*. Oh! the blessed Choice of that Soul that is still seeking more *Love to God*, more Affection, and more Ability to do him Service; that counts all Days and Hours for lost that are not employed to this Improvement; that hears the Word in publick, and reads it in private for this Purpose, to kindle this Love, or to blow the Sparkle, if any there be already in the Heart, to raise it to a clear Flame, and from a little Flame to make it burn yet hotter and purer, and rise higher. But, above all Means, is often presenting *this* in Prayer to him, on whose Influence all depends, in whose Hand our Hearts are, much more than in our own. It follows him with this Desire, and works on him by his own Interest. Though there can be really no Accession of Gain to him by our Services,

yet he is pleased so to account with us as if there were. Therefore we may urge this: "Lord give more, and receive more; *I will run the Way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my Heart.*"

We have here in the Words a required *Disposition*, and a suitable *Resolution*. The *Disposition* relates to the *Resolution*, as the Means of fulfilling it, and the *Resolution* relates to the *Disposition*, both as the End of desiring it, and as the Motive of obtaining it. The *Resolution* occurs first in the Words.

I will run, &c.] The *Way* resolved on is that of God's Commandments, not the Road of the polluted World, not the crooked Ways of his own Heart, but the High-way, the Royal Way, the straight Way of the Kingdom, and that in the Notion of Subjection and Obedience, the *Way of thy Commandments*. This *Man* naturally struggles against and repines at. To be limited and bounded by a Law is a Restraint, and a vain Man could possibly find in his Heart to do many of the same Things that are commanded, but he would not be tied, would have his Liberty, and do it of his own Choice. This is the *Enmity of the carnal Mind* against God, as the Apostle expresses it, *it is not subject to the Law of God, neither can it be*; it breaks these Bonds, and casts away the Cords of his Authority. This is Sin, the Transgression of a Law, and this made the first Sin so great, though in a Matter one would think small, the eating of the Fruit of a Tree; it was Rebellion against the Majesty of God, casting off his Law and Authority, and aspiring to an imagined Self-Deity. And this is still the treasonable Pride, or Independency, and Wickedness of our Nature, rising up against God that formed us of nothing.

And this is the Power and Substance of Religion, the new Impress of God upon the Heart, and Obedience and Resignment to him, to be given up to him as entirely his, to be moulded and ordered as he will, to be subject to his Laws and Appointments in all Things, to have every Action, and every Word, under

under a Rule and Law, and the Penalty to be so high, eternal Death. All this to a carnal or haughty Mind is hard; not only every Action and Word, but even every Thought too, must be subject; not so much as thought-free, * *every Thought is brought into Captivity*, (as the Apostle speaks, and so the licentious Mind accounts it) not only the Affections and Desires, but the very † Reasonings and Imaginations are brought under this Law.

Now to yield this as reasonable and due to God, to own his Sovereignty, and to acknowledge the Law, to be holy, just and good; to approve, yea, to love it, even there where it most contradicts and controuls our own corrupt Will, and the Law of Sin in our Flesh, this is true spiritual Obedience; to study and enquire after the Will of God in all our Ways, what will please him, and having found it, to follow that which is here called the *Way of his Commandments*; to make this *our Way*, and our Business in the World, and all other Things but Accessaries and By-works; even those lawful Things that may be taken in, and used as Helps in our Way. As the Disciples passing through the Corn pluck'd the Ears, and did eat in passing, as a By-work, but their Business was to follow their Master. And whatsoever would hinder us in this Way, must be watched and guarded against. To effect that, we must either remove and thrust it aside, or if we cannot do that, yet we must go over it, and trample it under Foot, were it the Thing or the Person that is dearest to us in the World. Till the Heart be brought to this State and Purpose, it is either wholly void of, or very low and weak in the Truth of Religion.

We place Religion much in our accustomed Performances, in coming to Church, hearing and repeating of Sermons, and praying at home, keeping a Road of such and such Duties. The *Way of God's Commandments* is more in *Doing* than in *Discourse*. In many, Religion evaporates itself too much out by

* 2 Cor. x. 5.

† Λογισμός.

the Tongue, while it appears too little in their *Ways*. Oh! but this is the main; one Act of Charity, Meekness, or Humility, speaks more than a Day's Discourse. All the Means we use in Religion are intended for a further *End*, which if they attain not, they are nothing. This *End* is to mortify and purify the Heart, to mould it to the Way of God's Commandments in the whole Tract of our Lives; in our private Converse one with another, and our retired secret Converse with ourselves; to have God still before us, and his Law our Rule in all we do; that he may be our Meditation Day and Night, and that his Law may be our *Counsellor*, as this Psalm hath it, to regulate all our Designs, and the Works of our Callings by it. *To walk soberly and godly, and righteously in this present World*; to curb and cross our own Wills where they cross God's; to deny ourselves our own Humour and Pride, our Passions and Pleasures, to have all those subdued, and brought under, by the Power of the Law of Love within us. This, and nothing below this, is the End of Religion. Alas! amongst Multitudes that are called Christians, some there may be that speak and appear like it, yet how few are there that make this their Business, and aspire to this, *The Way of God's Commandments*.

His intended Course in this Way, he expresses by *running*; it is good to be in this Way even in the slowest Motions, Love will *creep* where it cannot go. But if thou art so indeed, then thou wilt long for a swifter Motion; if thou do but creep, be doing, creep on, yet desire to be enabled to go; if thou goest, but yet halting and lamely, desire to be strengthened to walk straight, and if thou walkest, let not that satisfy thee, desire to *run*. So here *David* did *walk* in this Way; but he earnestly wishes to mend his Pace, he would willingly *run*, and for that End he desires an *enlarged Heart*.

Some dispute and descant too much whether they go or no, and childishly tell their Steps, and would know at every Pace whether they advance or no, and
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how much they advance, and thus amuse themselves, and spend the Time of doing, and going, in questioning and doubting. Thus it is with many Christians, but it were a more wise and comfortable Way, to be endeavouring onwards, and if thou make little Progress, at least to be desiring to make more; to be praying and walking, and praying that thou may'st walk faster, and that in the End thou may'st run, not satisfied with any thing attained, but yet by that Unsatisfiedness not to be so dejected as to sit down, or stand still, but rather excited to go on. So it was with St. Paul, *Philip, iii. 13. * Forgetting these things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press forward.* If any one thinks that he hath done well and run far, and will take a Pause, the great Apostle is of another Mind, *Not as if I had attained.* Oh no! far from that, he still goes forward, as if nothing were done, as a Runner, not still looking back how much he hath run, but forward to what he is to run, *stretching forth* to that, inflamed with frequent looks at the Mark and End. Some are retarded by looking on what is past, as not satisfied, they have done nothing as they think, and so stand still discontented; but even in that Way, it is not good to look too much to things behind, we must forget them rather and press onwards.

Some, if they have gone on well, and possibly run a while, yet if they fall, then they are ready, in a desperate Malecontent, to lye still, and think all is lost; and in this peevish fretting at their Falls, some Men please themselves, and take it for Repentance, whereas indeed it is not that, but rather Pride and Humour; Repentance is a more submissive humble thing. But this is that which troubles some Men at their new Falls, (especially if after a long time of even walking or running) they think their Project is now spoiled, their Thoughts are broken off, they would have had somewhat to have rejoiced in, if they had still gone on to the End, but being disappointed

of that, they think they had as good let alone, and give over. Oh! but the humble Christian is better taught, his Falls teach him indeed to abhor himself, they discover his own Weakness to him, and empty him of Self-trust, but they do not dismay him to get up and go on, not boldly and carelessly forgetting his Fall, but in the humble Sense of it walking the more warily, but not the less swiftly; yea, the more swiftly too, making the more haste to regain the Time lost by the Fall. So then if you would run in this Way, depend on the Strength of God, and on his Spirit, leading thee, that so thou mayest not fall, and yet if thou dost fall, arise; and if thou art plunged in the Mire, go to the Fountain opened for Sin and Uncleanness, and wash there, bemoan thyself before thy Lord; and if hurt, and bleeding by thy Fall, yet look to him, desire Jesus to pity thee, and bind up, and cure thy Wound, washing off thy Blood, and pouring in of his own.

However it is with thee, give not over, faint not, run on; and that thou mayest run the more easily and expeditely, make thyself as light as may be, *lay aside every Weight*, Heb. xii. 1, 2. Clog not thyself with unnecessary Burdens of Earth, and especially lay aside that, that, of all other things, weighs the heaviest, and cleaves the closest, *the Sin that so easily be-sets us*, and is so hardly put off us, that folds so con-naturally to us, and we therefore think will not hinder us much. And not only the Sins that are more outward, but the inner close cleaving Sins, the Sin that most of all sits easily to us, not only our Cloak, but our inner Coat, away with that too, as our Sa-viour says in another Case, and *run the Race set before us*, our appointed Stage, and that *with Patience*, under all Oppositions, and Discouragements from the World without, and Sin within. And to encourage thee in this, look to such a *Cloud of Witnesses* that compasseth us about to further us; as Troubles, Temptations and Sin, do to hinder us. *They en-counter the like Sufferings*, and were encountered

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with the like *Sins*, and yet they run on and got home. *Alexander* would have run in the *Olympick Games* if he had had Kings to run with: Now in this Race, Kings, and Prophets, and righteous Persons, run; yea, all are indeed a *kingly Generation*, each one Heir to a Crown as the *Prize* of this Race.

And if these encourage thee but little, then look beyond them, above that Cloud of Witnesses, to the *Sun*, the *Sun of Righteousness*; looking off from all things here, that would either entangle thee, or discourage thee, taking thine Eye off from them, and looking to him that will powerfully draw thee and animate thee. Look to *Jesus* not only as thy *Forerunner* in this Race, but also as thy *Undertaker* in it, the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*. His attaining the End of the Race is the Pledge of thy attaining, if thou follow him chearfully on the same Encouragements that he looked to, *who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame, and is now set down at the Right Hand of God.*

When thou shalt enlarge my Heart.] In all Beings, the Heart is the Principle of Motion, and according as it is more or less perfect in its Kind, those Motions that flow from it, are more or less vigorous. Therefore hath the *Psalmist* good Reason, to the end his spiritual Course may be the stedfaster, and the faster, to desire that the Principle of it, the *Heart*, may be more enabled and disposed, which here he expresses by its being *enlarged*.

What this *Enlargement of the Heart* is, a Man's own inward Sense should easily explain to him. Sure it would, did Men reflect on it, and were they acquainted with their own Hearts, but the most are not. They would find the carnal natural Heart, a narrow contracted hampered thing, bound with Cords and Chains of its own twisting and forging, and so incapable of *walking*, much less of *running* in this Way of God's Commandments, till it be freed and enlarged.

The Heart is taken generally in Scripture, for the whole Soul, the *Understanding* and *Will*, in its several Affections and Motions; and the Speech being here of an *enlarged Heart*, it seems very congruous to take it in the most enlarged Sense.

It is said of *Solomon*, that he had a *large Heart* (the same Word that is here) *as the Sand of the Seashore*; that is, a vast comprehensive Spirit, that could fathom much of Nature, both its greater and lesser things. *He spoke of Trees, from the Cedar in Lebanon, to the Hyssop in the Wall, and of great Beasts, and small creeping things.*

Thus I conceive, the *Enlargement of the Heart* compriseth the enlightening of the Understanding. There arises a clearer Light there, to discern spiritual Things in a more spiritual Manner; to see the vast Difference betwixt the vain Things the World goes after, and the true solid Delight that is in the *Way of God's Commandments*; to know the false Blush of the Pleasures of Sin, and what Deformity is under that painted Mask, and not be allured by it; to have enlarged Apprehensions of God, his Excellency, and Greatness, and Goodness; how worthy he is to be obeyed and served. This is the great Dignity and Happiness of the Soul, all other Pretensions are low and poor, in respect of this. Here then is Enlargement to see the Purity and Beauty of his Law, how just and reasonable, yea, how pleasant and amiable it is; that his Commandments are not grievous, that they are Beds of Spices, the more we walk in them, still the more of their fragrant Smell and Sweetness we find.

And then consequently, upon the larger and clearer Knowledge of these things, the Heart dilates itself in Affection; the more it knows of God, still the more it loves him, and the less it loves this present World; Love is the great *Enlarger* of the Heart to all Obedience. Then nothing is hard, yea, the hardest things become the more delightful.

All Love of other things doth pinch and contract the Heart, for they are all narrower than itself. It is framed to that Wideness in its first Creation, capable of enjoying God, though not of a full comprehending him. Therefore all other things gather it in, and straiten it from its natural Size, only the Love of God stretches and dilates it. He is large enough for it, yea, it, in its fullest Enlargement, is infinitely too narrow for him. Do not at all find it, if they will ask themselves, that in all other Loves and Pursuits in this World, there is still somewhat that pinches? The Soul is not at its full Size, but as a Foot in a strait Shoe, is somewhere bound and pained, and cannot go freely, much less run; though another that looks on cannot tell where, yet each one feels it. But when the Soul is set free from these narrow things, and is raised to the Love of God, then is it at ease, and at large, and hath Room enough; it is both *elevated* and *dilated*. And this Word signifies a *high-raised* Soul, and is sometimes taken for *proud* and *lofty*; but there is a *Greatness* and *Height* of Spirit in the Love of God, and Union with him, that doth not vainly swell and lift it up, but with the deepest *Humility*, joins the *highest* and *truest Magnanimity*. It sets the Soul above the Snares that lye here below, in which most Men creep and are intangled, in that *Way of Life that is on high to the Just*, as *Solomon* speaks.

Good Reason hath *David* to join these together, and to desire the one as the Spring and Cause of the other. An *enlarged Heart*, that he might *run the Way of God's Commandments*.

Sensible Joys and Consolations in God, do encourage and enlarge the Heart, but these are not so general to all, nor so constant to any. Love is the abounding fixed Spring of ready Obedience, and will make the Heart chearful in serving God, even without those felt Comforts, when he is pleased to deny, or withdraw them.

In that Course or Race, is understood *Constancy*, *Activity* and *Alacrity*, and all these flow from the Enlargement of the Heart.

1. *Constancy*: A narrow enthralled Heart, fetter'd with the Love of lower things, and cleaving to some particular Sins, or but some one, and that secret, may keep Foot a while in the Way of God's Commandments, in some Steps of them; but it must give up quickly, is not able to run on to the End of the Goal. But a Heart that hath laid aside every Weight, and the most close-cleaving and besetting Sin (as it is in that Place to the *Hebrews*) hath stript itself of all that may falter or intangle it, it runs, and runs on, without fainting or wearing, it is at large, hath nothing that pains it in the Race.

2. *Activity*: Not only holding on, but running, which is a swift nimble Race. It stands not bargaining and disputing, but once knowing God's Mind, there is no more Question or Demur. *I made haste and delayed not*, as in this *Psalms* the Word is, did not stay upon why, and wherefore; he stood not to reason the Matter but run on. And this Love, enlarging the Heart, makes it abundant in the Work of the Lord, quick and active, dispatching much in a little time.

3. *Alacrity*: All done with Chearfulness, so no other Constraint is needful, where this overpowering sweet Constraint of Love is. *I will run*, not be hauled, and drawn as by Force, but *skip and leap*, as the evangelick Promise is, that the *lame shall leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the dumb sing: For in the Wilderness shall Waters break out, and Streams in the Desert*, Isa. xxxv. 6. The Spouse desires her Beloved *to hasten as a Roe and Hind on the Mountains of Spices*, and she doth so, and each faithful Soul runs towards him, to meet him in his Way.

It is a sad heavy thing to do any thing as in Obedience to God, while the Heart is straitned, not enlarged towards him by his divine Love; but that once taking Possession, and enlarging the Heart, that

inward Principle of Obedience, makes the outward Obedience sweet, it is then a natural Motion. Indeed, the Soul runs in the Ways of God, as the Sun in his Course, which finds no Difficulty, being naturally fitted and carried to that Motion, he *goes forth as a Bridegroom, and rejoiceth as a strong Man to run a Race.*

This is the great Point that our Souls should be studious of, to attain more *Evenness*, and *Nimbleness*, and *Cheerfulness*, in the Ways of God, and for this End we ought to seek above all things this *enlarged Heart*; it is want of this makes us bog, and drive heavily, and run long upon little Ground. Oh! my Beloved, how shallow and narrow are our Thoughts of God? Most even of those that are truly godly, yet are led on by a kind of Instinct, and carried they scarce know how, to give some Attendance on God's Worship, and to the Avoidance of gross Sin, and go on in a blameless Course. It is better thus, than to run to Excess of *Riot* and open Wickedness, with the ungodly World. But, alas! this is but a dull, heavy, and languid Motion, where the Heart is not enlarged by the daily growing Love of God. Few, few are acquainted with that delightful Contemplation of God, that ventilates and raises this Flame of Love. Petty things bind and contract our Spirits, so that they feel little Joy in God, little ardent active Desire to do him Service, to crucify Sin, to break and undo Self-love within us, to root up our own Wills to make Room for his, that his alone may be ours, that we may have no Will of our own, that our daily Work may be to grow more like him in the Beauty of Holiness. You think it a hard Saying, to part with your carnal Lusts and Delights, and the common Ways of the World, and to be tied to a strict exact Conversation all your Days. But oh! the Reason of this is, because the Heart is yet straitened, and enthralled by the base Love of these mean things, and that is from the Ignorance of things higher and better. One Glance of God, a Touch of his

his Love will free and enlarge the Heart, so that it can deny all, and part with all, and make an entire renouncing of all, to follow *Him*. It sees enough in *Him*, and in *Him* alone, and therefore can neither quietly rest on, nor earnestly desire any thing beside *Him*.

Oh! that you would apply your Hearts to consider the Excellency of this Way of God's Commandments. Our wretched Hearts are prejudiced, they think it melancholy and sad. Oh! there is no Way truly joyous but this, *They shall sing in the Ways of the Lord*, says the Prophet. Do not Men, when their Eyes are opened, see a Beauty in Meekness, and Temperance, and Humility, a present Delightfulness and Quietness in them; whereas in Pride, and Passion, and Intemperance, there is nothing but Vexation and Disquiet. And then consider the *End* of this Way, and this Race in it, *Rest and Peace* for ever; 'tis the Way of *Peace*, both in its own Nature, and in respect of its End. Did you believe that Joy and Glory that is set before you in this Way, you would not any of you defer a Day longer, but forthwith you would break from all that holds you back, and enter into this Way, and run on cheerfully in it. The Persuasion of these great Things *above* would enlarge and greaten the Heart, and make the greatest Things *here* very little in your Eyes.

But would you attain to this enlarged Heart for this Race; as you ought to apply your Thoughts to these divine Things, and stretch them on the Promises made in the Word; above all, take *David's* Course, seek this Enlargement of Heart from God's own Hand, for it is here propounded and laid before God by way of Request: "See what is my Desire, I would gladly serve thee better, and advance more in *the Way of thy Commandments*. Now this I cannot do till my Heart be more enlarged, and that cannot be but by thy Hand, *When thou shalt enlarge my Heart*." Present this Suit often, it

is in his Power to do it for thee; he can stretch and expand thy straitned Heart, can spread and hoist the Sails within thee, and then carry thee on swiftly; filling them not with the vain Air of Man's Applause, which readily run a Soul upon Rocks and splits it, but with the sweet Breathings and soft Gales of his own Spirit, that carry it straight to the desired Haven.

Findest thou Sin cleaving to thee and clogging thee, cry to him, " Help Lord, set me free from my narrow Heart. — I strive but in vain without thee, still it continues so. — I know little of thee, my Affections are dead and cold towards thee. — Lord I desire to love thee, here is my Heart, and lest it fly out, lay hold on it, and take thine own Way with it, though it should be in a painful Way, yet draw it forth, yea draw it that it may run after thee." All is his own working, and all his Motive is his own free Grace. Let who will fancy themselves Masters of their own Hearts, and think to enlarge them by the Strength of their own Stretches of Speculation; they alone, they alone are in the sure and happy Way of attaining it, that humbly suit and wait for this Enlargement of Heart from his Hand that made it.

S E R M O N XVI.

ROM. VIII. 33, 34.

*Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect?
It is God that justifieth, &c.*

OTHER Men may fancy and boast as they please, but there are none in the World but the Godly alone that are furnish'd with sufficiently strong Supports and Comforts against all possible

possible Hazards, and of these doth the Apostle treat most freely, sweetly and plentifully in this Chapter. He secures Believers in their Christ, touching the two great Evils, *After Condemnation*, and *present Affliction*, that the one cannot befall them, and the other cannot hurt them.

For their Immunity from the *former*, they have the clear Word of the Gospel, and the Seal of the Spirit; and that former Privilege made sure, as the far greater, doth secure the other as the *lesser*.

They are freed from Condemnation, and not only so, but intitled and insured to a Kingdom. And what Hurt then can Affliction do? Yea, it doth Good; yea, not only it cannot rob them of their Crown, but it carries them on towards it, is their High-way to it: *If we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together.* Yea, all Things to the Children of God do prove Advantage; severally taken, in their present Sense, they may seem evil, but taken jointly in their after Issue, their working together are all for good. In their simple Nature possibly they are Poison, yet contempered and prepared, they shall prove medicinal. *All these Things are against me*, said old *Jacob*, and yet he lived to see even all these were for him. The Children of God are indeed so happy, that the hardest Things in their Way change their Nature, and become sweet and profitable. This much is effected by their Prayers, that have a Divine Incantation in them. They breathe forth the Expressions of that their Love to God, by which they are character'd, *them that love God*; and *that* is put on their Hearts, the *Impression of his Love to them*, to which they are here led, by the Apostle, as to the Spring-head of all. All their Comforts and Privileges flow thence, yea, all their Love, and their Faith, appropriating those Comforts and Privileges. Yea, the very Treasury of all together, *Jesus Christ* himself is the free Gift of this free Love; He, as the greatest, ascertains all Things besides as unspeakably less, *Ver. 32.*

These two are such mighty Arguments, that no Difficulty nor Grief can stand before them. The *Love of God*; He is with us, who then against us? All the World it may be, but that all is nothing. Once it was nothing; it was that God, that is our God, that loves us, and is for us, that made it something, and if he will, it may again be nothing. And as it is at its best, it is nothing, being compared with *another Gift* that he hath bestowed on us, and having bestowed that, sure if there be any thing in this World can do us any good, we shall not want it. *He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up to the Death for us, will he not with him give us all Things?*

And to close all, he makes these two great Immunities good to us in *Christ*. He fixes *there*; *there* we are freed from all Fear of Condemnation, or of being hurt by Affliction. No Accusation nor Guiltiness can annul the Righteousness of Christ, and that is made ours; no Distress nor Suffering can cut us off from the Love of God: And if it cannot do that, we need not fear it, all other Hazards are no Hazard, that being sure.

And in Confidence of this, the Apostle gives the Defiance, casts a Challenge to Angels, to Men, to all the World, upon these two Points, Who shall *accuse*, Who shall *separate*? Accuse to God, or separate from him. Whatsoever Times may come, the hardest that any can apprehend or foretel, if these two be not sufficient Furniture against them, I know not what is.

Men are commonly busied about other Events concerning *them* and *theirs*, what shall become of *this* or the *other*, and what if this or that fall out: but the Conscience once raised to this Enquiry, the Soul being awake to discern the Hazard of eternal Death, all other Fears and Questions are drowned and lost in this great Question, “Am I condemned or not? “Is my Sin pardoned or no?”

And then a satisfying Answer received concerning this, all is quiet, the Soul reposes sweetly on God,
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and puts all its other Concernments into his Hands. "Let him make me poor and despised, let him smite and chastise me, he hath forgiven my Sin, all is well." That Burden taken off, the Soul can go light, yea, can leap and dance under all other Burdens. Oh! how it feels itself nimble, as a Man eased of a Load that he was even fainting under. Oh! blessed the Man whose Sin is taken off, *lifted from his Shoulders*, (that's the Word, *Psal. xxxii. 1.*) laid over upon Christ, who could *bear* the whole Load, and *take it away*, take it out of Sight, which we could never have done; no, they would have sunk us for ever. That one Word *aspes*, *Job. i.* signifies both, and answers to the two, *Isa. liii. He hath born our Grief, and carried our Sorrows*; lifted them away. Oh! how sweet a Burden, instead of this, is that Engagement of *Obedience* and *Love* to him as our Redeemer, and that is all he lays on us. If we follow him, and bear his Cross, he is our Strength, and bears both it and us. So then this is the great point, the Heart's Ease, to be delivered from the condemning Weight of Sin.

And certainly, while Men do not think thus, their Hearts have very slight Impressions of the Truth of these Things. I fear the most of us scarce believe this Condemnation to come, at least very shallowly, and so they cannot much consider the Deliverance from it provided to us in Jesus Christ. I cannot see how it is possible for a Heart persuaded of these, to be very careful about any thing beside. You that eat and drink, and labour and trade, and bestow all your Time, either in the Pains or the Pleasures of this Earth, what think you of Eternity? Is it a light thing for you to perish for ever? After a few Days vainly spent, to fall under the Wrath of God for ever? Oh! that you would be persuaded to think on these Things.

And you that have an Interest in this free and blessed Estate, why are your Spirits so cold, so infrequent in the Thoughts of it? Why are you not

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rejoicing in the Lord; Gladdening yourselves in secret when you remember this: "Go the World as it will, my Sin is forgiven me; mistake me, accuse me who so will, n^r God hath acquitted me in his Christ, and He loves me, and lives to intercede for me."

Methinks I hear some say, "Ay, they that could say that, might be merry indeed; but, alas! I have no such Assurance, *Who can lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* That's true; but here is the great Point of so hard a Resolution, Am I one of these?"

That the Apostle doth thus specify the Owners of this Consolation, by this high and hidden Character of their Election, is not to render it doubtful and dark; for his main Aim, on the contrary, is both to extend it as far as it can go, and to make it as clear as may be to all that have Interest in it: But he designs them by the primitive Act of Love fixing on them, so as it is now manifested to them in the subsequent Effects, that flow from the Elect called and sanctified, and conformed to Jesus Christ both by his Spirit within them, and the Sufferings that without arise against them in the World; such as, being *the Sons of God, are led by the Spirit of God, and walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.*

And these Things indeed considered as their Characters, the Stamp of God on them, the Impressions of their Election to Life, do check the vain Confidence of all carnal ungodly Professors of the Name of Christ, and tell them that their pretended Title to him is a mere Delusion; certainly, whosoever lies in the Love of Sin, and takes the Flesh for his Guide, that accursed blind Guide is leading him into the Pit. What gross Folly and Impudence is it for any Man, walking in the Lusts of his own Heart, to fancy and aver himself to be a Partner of that Redemption, whereof so great a Part is to deliver us from the Power of our Iniquities, to renew our Hearts, and re-unite them to God, and possess them with his Love.

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The great Evidence of thy Election is Love. Thy Love to him gives certain Testimony of his preceeding eternal Love to thee, so are they here designed, *they that love God*, thy chusing him is the Effect and Evidence of his chusing thee. Now this is not laborious, that needs to be disputed, amidst all thy Frailties; feel the Pulse of thine Affection, which way beats it, and ask thy Heart whether thou love him or not, in this thou hast the Character of thy Election.

Know you not, that the redeemed of Christ and he are one, they live one Life, Christ lives in them, and if *any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, as the Apostle declares in this Chapter? So then, this we are plainly to tell you, and consider it, you that will not let go your Sins to lay hold on Christ, have as yet no Share in him.

But on the other Side: The Truth is, that when Souls are once set upon this Search, they commonly wind the Notion too high, and subtilize too much in the Dispute, and so entangle and perplex themselves, and drive themselves further off from that Comfort that they are seeking after; such Measures and Marks of Grace, they set to themselves for their Rule and Standard; and unless they find those without all Controversy in themselves, they will not believe that they have an Interest in Christ, and this blessed and safe Estate in him.

To such I would only say, Are you in a willing League with any known Sin? Yea, would you willingly, if you might be saved in that Way, give up yourself to Voluptuousness and Ungodliness, and not at all desire to follow Jesus Christ in the Way of Holiness? Then truly, I have not any thing as yet to say for your Comfort, only there is a Salvation provided, and the Door is yet open, and your Heart may be changed. But on the other Side, are the Desires of thy Soul after Christ, whole Christ to be Righteousness, and withal Sanctification to thee? Wouldst thou willingly give up thyself to be ruled by him, and have him thy King? Hadst thou rather chuse

chuse to suffer the greatest Affliction for his Sake, to honour him, than to commit the least Sin to displease him? Doth thy Heart go out after him, when thou hearest him spoke off? Dost thou account him thy Treasure, so that all the World sounds but as an empty Shell to thee, when he is named? Says thy Soul within thee, oh! that he were mine? And, oh! that I were his, that I could please him, and live to him? Then do not toss thy Spirit, and jangle and spin out thy Thoughts in fruitless, endless Doubtings, but close with this as thy Portion, and be of good Comfort, thy Sins are, or will be forgiven thee.

I add yet further, if thou say'st yet, that thou findest none of all this, yet I say, there is Warrant for thee to believe and lay hold on this Righteousness here held forth, to the end that thou may'st then find those things in thee, and find Comfort in them. Thou art convinced of Ungodliness, then believe on him that justifies the Ungodly, thou art condemned, yet Christ is dead and risen, fly to him as such, as the Lamb slain, *he that was dead and is alive*, and then say, *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, or rather that is risen. Who shall accuse?* It is true, they may clamour, and make a Noise, both *Satan* and thy Conscience, but how can they fasten any Accusation on thee? If they dare accuse, yet they cannot condemn, when the Judge hath acquitted thee, and declared thee free, who is greater than all, and hath the absolute Power of the Sentence; all Charges and Libels come too late after he hath once pronounced a Soul righteous. And who shall condemn, *it is Christ that died*, if the Sentence of the Law be brought forth? Yet here is the Answer, It ought not to be *twice* satisfied; now once it is in Christ, he hath died, and that stands for the Believer. Whosoever flies to him, and lays hold on him for Life, he cannot dy again; nor canst thou dy, for whom he died once, or rather is risen; that raises the Assurance higher, and sets it firmer; for this evidences that in his Death all was paid, when he being
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the Surety, and seized on for the Debt, and once Death's Prisoner, yet was set free. This clears the Matter that there is no more to be said; and yet further, in sign that all is done, he is raised to the Height of Honour above all Principalities and Powers, is set at the right Hand of the Father, and there he sits and lives to make Intercession, to sue out the fulfilling of all for Believers, the bringing of them home, lives to see all made good that he died and covenanted for; so now his Righteousness is thine, that believest, any Challenge must meet with Christ first, and if it seize on him, it cannot light on thee, for thou art in him, married to him. And the same Triumph that he speaks, *Isa.* l. 8. whence these Words are borrowed, that is made thine, and thou may'st now speak it in him. I know not what can cast him down that hath this Word to rest upon, and to comfort himself in.

S E R M O N XVII.

R O M. VIII. 35. &c.

Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword? &c.

IS this he that so lately cried out, *O wretched Man that I am! Who shall deliver me?* That now triumphs. *O happy Man! Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ?*

Yes, it is the same. Pained then with the Thoughts of that miserable Conjunction with a Body of Death, and so crying out, who will deliver? Who will separate me from that now? Now he hath found a Deliverer to do that for him, to whom he is for ever united,

united, and he glories now in his inseparable Union, and unalterable Love, that none can divide him from, yea it is through him, that presently after that Word of Complaint he praises God, and now in him he triumphs. So vast a Difference is there betwixt a Christian, taken in himself, and in Christ; when he views himself in himself, then he is nothing but a poor, miserable, polluted, perishing Wretch; but then he looks again, and sees himself in Christ, and there he is rich, and safe, and happy, he triumphs, and he glories in it above all the painted Prosperities, and against all the horrid Adversities of the World, he lives in his Christ content and happy, and laughs at all Enemies.

And he extends his Triumph, he makes a common Good of it, to all Believers, speaks it in their Name, *who shall separate us?* and would have them partake of the same Confidence, and speak in the same Stile with him. It is vain that Men fancy these to be Expressions of Revelations, or some singularly privileged Assurances, then they would not suit their End, which is clearly and undoubtedly the Encouragement of all the Children of God, upon Grounds that are peculiar to them from all the rest of the World, but common to them all, in all Ages, and all Varieties of Condition.

It is true, all of them have not alike clear and firm Apprehension of their happy and sure Estate, and scarce any of them are alike at all Times; yea they have all and always the same Right to this Estate, and to the Comfort of it, and when they stand in a right Light to view it, they do see it so, and rejoice in it.

There be indeed some kind of Assurances that are more rare and extraordinary, some immediate Glances, or Coruscations of the Love of God upon the Soul of a Believer; a Smile of his Countenance, and this doth exceedingly refresh, yea ravish the Soul, and enables it mightily for Duties and Sufferings. These he dispenses arbitrarily and freely where and when he will;

will; some weaker Christians sometimes have them, while stronger are Strangers to them, the Lord training them to live more contentedly by Faith till the Day of Vision come.

And that is the other, the less extatical, but the more constant and fixed kind of Assurance, the proper Assurance of Faith, The Soul by believing cleaves unto God in Christ as he offers himself in the Gospel, and thence is possess'd with a sweet and calm Persuasion of his Love, that being the proper work, to appropriate him, to make Christ, and in him eternal Life, ours: So it is the proper Result and Fruit of that its acting, especially when it acts any thing strongly to quiet the Soul in him; then *being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*, and from that Peace, Joy; yea even glorying in Tribulation, as there follows. And these springing not from an extraordinary Sense or View, but from the very innate Virtue of Faith working kindly, and according to its own Nature.

Therefore many Christians do prejudice their own Comfort, and darken their Spirits, by not giving Freedom to Faith to act according to its Nature and proper Principles; they will not believe till they find some Evidence, or Assurance, which is quite to invert the Order of the thing, and to look for Fruit without settling a Root for it to grow from.

Would you take Christ upon the absolute Word of Promise tending him to you, and rest on him, so this would ingraft you into Life itself, for that he is, and so those Fruits of the Holy Ghost would bud and flourish in your Hearts; from that very believing on him, would arise this Persuasion, yea, even to a Gloriation, and an humble Boasting in his Love, *who shall accuse, who shall condemn, who shall separate?*

The undivided Companion, and undoubted Helper and Preserver of this Confidence of Faith, is an *active Love* to Christ, a constant Study of Holiness, and Strife against Sin, which is the grand Enemy of Faith, that obstructs the very vital Spirits of Faith,

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that

that makes it sickly and heavy in its Actings, and causes the Palsy in the Hand of Faith, that it cannot lay so fast hold. Therefore this you would be careful of, yea, know that of Necessity it attends Faith, and as Faith grows, Holiness will grow, and Holiness growing will mutually strengthen and establish Faith; the Comforts of the Holy Ghost are holy purifying Comforts, and the more the Soul is purified, and made holy, the more is it cleared and enlarged, to receive much of these Comforts. *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God*; Unholiness is as Damps and filthy Mists in the Soul, it darkens all.

Hence it is evident, in what way Christians may and ought to aspire to this Assurance, it is their Portion, and in this Way they are to aspire to it, and shall find it, if not presently, yet let them wait and go on in this Way, they shall not miscarry.

Again it appears, that this Assurance is no Enemy to *holy* Diligence, nor Friend of *carnal* Security; on the contrary, it is the only thing that doth eminently ennoble and embolden the Soul for all Adventures and Services. Base Fears and Doubtings, wherein some place much of Religion, and many weak Christians seem to be in that Mistake, to think it a kind of holy spiritual Temper to be questioning and doubting; I say, these base Fears can never produce any thing truly generous, no Height of Obedience, they do nothing but entangle and disable the Soul for every good Work, *perfect Love casts out this Fear*, and works a sweet unperplexing Fear, a holy Wariness not to offend, which fears nothing else. And this Confidence of Love is the great secret of Comfort, and of Ability to do God Service. Nothing makes so strong and healthful a Constitution of Soul as pure Love, it dare submit to God, and resign itself to him, it dare venture itself in his Hand, and trust his Word, and seeks no more but how to please him. A Heart thus composed, goes readily and cheerfully unto all Services, to do, to suffer, to live, to dy, at his Pleasure, and firmly stands to this, that
nothing

nothing can separate it from that which is sufficient to it, which is all its Happiness, the Love of God in Christ Jesus.

That is indeed his Love to us, but so as it includes inseparably the Inseparableness of our Love to him; for observe the things specified as most likely, if any thing, to separate us; shall *Tribulation, Distress, &c.* Now these especially, being endured for his Sake, cannot immediately have any likely Visage of altering his Love to us, but rather confirm us in it; but these shall not separate us neither by altering our Love to him, by driving us from him, and carrying us into any way of Defection, or Denial of his Name, and so cut us off from our Union with him, and Interest in his Love; and that is the Way wherein the weak Christian will most apprehend the Hazard of Separation. Now the Apostle speaks his own Sense, and would raise in his Brethren the same Confidence, as to that Danger.

No Fear; not one of these Things shall be able to carry us away: These mighty Waves shall not unsettle our Faith, nor quench the Flame of our Love; we shall be Victors and more, in all, but how? *Through him that hath loved us.*

This his Love makes sure ours; he hath such hold of our Hearts as he will not let go, nor suffer us to let go our hold: All is fast by his Strength. He will not lose us, nor shall any be able to pluck us out of his Hand.

Jesus Christ is the *Medium* of this Love, the middle Link that keeps all safe together betwixt God and Man, so close united in his personal Nature, and the Persons of Men in and by him, to the Father. So here it is first called the *Love of Christ*, and then in the Close, the *Love of God in Christ*; the Soul first carried to him as nearest, but so carried by him into that primitive Love of God that flows in Christ, and that gave even Christ to us as before. And this is the Bottom-truth, the firm Ground of the Saints Perseverance, which Men not taking aright, must needs

question the Matter, yea, may put it out of question upon their Suppositions: For if our own Purposes and Strength were all we had to rely on, alas! how soon were we shaken?

So the Love of God in Christ is not only here mentioned as the Point of Happiness, from which we cannot be removed, but as the Principle of Firmness that makes itself sure of us, and us of it, and will not part with us.

Now it is no Pride in a Christian, but the truest Humility to triumph and glory in this. This is it that makes all sure; this is the great Comfort, and the Victory of the Saints.

He that loved us, and bought us so dear, will not lightly slip from us, yea, upon no Terms will he let us go, unless some stronger than he is meet with him, and by Force bereave him of us; which we know is impossible. He and his Father, who are one in themselves, and in their Strength, and one in this Love, are greater and stronger than all; and he that once overcame for us, always overcomes in us.

Thus he lets Temptations and Tribulations assault us, and this neither unargues his Love, nor endangers his Right to us; yea, it doth but give Proof and Evidence of the invincible Firmness of both. He suffers others to ly soft, and sit warm, and pamper their Flesh at leisure; but he hath nobler Business for his Champions, his Worthies, and most of all for the stoutest of them, he calls them forth to honourable Services, to the hardest Encounters he sets them on, one to fight with Sicknes, another with Poverty, another with Reproaches and Persecutions, with Prisons and Irons, and with Death itself: And all this while, loves he them less, or they him? Oh! No, he looks on and rejoices to see them do valiantly; it is the Joy of his Heart, no Sight on Earth so sweet to him: And it is all the while by his subduing, and in his Strength, that they hold out in the Conflict, and obtain the Conquest.

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And thus they are the more endeared to him by these Services, and these Adventures of Love for him, and he still likewise is the more endeared to them. Certainly the more any one suffers for Christ, the more he loves Christ, as Love doth grow and engage itself by all it does and suffers, and burns hotter by what it encounters and overcomes, as by Fewel added to it: As to Jesus Christ by what he suffered for us, we are the dearer to him, so he is to us by all we suffer for his sake.

Love grows most by Opposition from others who-soever, when it is sure of Acceptance, and the Correspondence of mutual Love in the Party loved. Above all, this heavenly divine Love is strong as Death, a vehement Flame, a Flame of God indeed, as the Word is, and *many Waters cannot quench it*, not all these that here follow one another, *Tribulation, Distress, Persecution, Famine, Nakedness, Peril, Sword*, yea, in the midst of these, I say, it grows; the Soul cleaves closer to Christ, the more Attempts are made to remove it from him, *though killed all the Day long*. (This Passage from the *Psalms* is most fit, both to testify that Persecution is not unusually the Lot of the Saints, and to give Instance of their firm Adherence to God in all Troubles, as the Church there professeth; and if the Saints in that Dispensation could reckon in such a Manner, much more ought Christians, upon a clearer Discovery of the Covenant of Grace, and their Union with God in Christ.) The Saints are as in a common Butchery in the World, yet not only as Sheep for the Slaughter, but sometimes as Sheep for the Altar, Men thinking it as Sacrifice. They *that kill you* (says our Saviour) *shall think they do God Service*; yet even this pulls not from him, they part with Life: Ay, why not, this Life is but a Death, and he is our Life for whom we lose it.

All these do but increase the Victories and Triumphs of Love, and make it more glorious: As they tell of her multiplying Labours to that Champion,
P 3 they

they are not only Conquerors, but more than Conquerors, by multiplied Victories, and they gain in them all both more Honour and more Strength; they are the fitter for new Adventures, and so more than simple Conquerors. We overcome, and are sure not to lose former Conquests, but to add more, and conquer on to the End: Which other Conquerors are not sure of; oftentimes they outlive their own Successes and Renown, and lose on a sudden what they have been gaining a whole Lifetime. Not so here; We are secured in the Author of our Victories, it is through him that hath loved us, and he cannot grow less, yea, shall still grow greater, till all his Enemies be made his Footstool,

Having given the Challenge, and finding none to answer, and that all, the most apparent, are in a most rhetorical Accumulation silenced, *Tribulation, Distress, Persecution, Famine, Nakedness, Peril, Sword, &c.* he goes on confidently in the Triumph, and averts his Assurance of full and final Victory against all imaginable Power of all the Creatures, neither Death, nor Life, nor the Fear of the most terrible Death, nor the Hope or Love of the most desirable Life: And in the Height of this Courage and Confidence, he supposes impossible Enemies, *Angels, Principalities, &c.* unless you take it of the Angels of Darkness only; but if it could be possible that the other should offer at such a thing, they would be too weak for it, No Sense of any present Things, or Apprehensions of Things to come, not any Thing within the vast Circle of the World above or below, nor any Creature can do it. Here Sin is not specified, because he is speaking of outward Oppositions and Difficulties expressly, and because that is removed by the former Challenge, *Who shall accuse?* That asserting a free and final Acquittance of all Sin, a Pardon of the Curse, which yet will never encourage any of these to sin that live in the Assurance of this Love. Oh! no, and these general Words do include it too, *Nothing present nor to come, &c.* So it is carried clear, and is the

the satisfying Comfort of all that Jesus Christ hath drawn after him, and united in his Love.

'Tis enough, whatsoever they may be separated from, the Things or Persons, dearest in this World; it is no matter, the Jewel is safe, none can take my Christ from me, and I safe in him, as his Purchase, none can take me from him. And being still in his Love, and through him in the Father's Love, that is sufficient. What can I fear? What can I want? All other Hazards signify nothing: How little Value are they of? And for how little a while am I in Danger of them? Methinks all should look on a Believer with an emulous Eye, and wish his Estate more than a King's.

Alas! poor Creatures, rich Men, great Men, Princes and Kings, what vain Things are they that you embrace and cleave to; whatsoever they be, soon must you part; can you say of any of them, Who shall separate us? Storms may arise and scatter Ships that sail fairly together in fair Weather: Thou mayest be removed, by publick Commotions and Calamities, from thy sweet Dwellings, and Societies, and Estates, &c. You may even live to see and seek your parting. At last you must part, for you must die: Then farewell Parks and Palaces, Gardens and Honours, and even Crowns themselves; then dearest Friends, Children and Wife must be parted with*. and what hast thou left, poor Soul, that hast not Christ, but that which thou wouldst gladly part with and canst not, The condemning Guilt of all thy Sins?

But the Soul that is in Christ, when other Things are pulled away, he feels little or nothing, he cleaves to Christ, and these Separations pain him not. Yea, when that great Separatist, Death, comes, that breaks all other Unions, even that of the Soul and Body, yet so far is it from separating the Believer's Soul from its

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beloved

* *Linquenda tellus & domus & placens uxor, &c.*

beloved Lord Jesus, that, on the contrary, it carries it into the nearest Union with him, and fullest Enjoyment of him for ever.

S E R M O N XVIII.

ISAIAH LIX. 1, 2.

Behold the Lord's Hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his Ear heavy that it cannot hear. But your Iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you, that he will not hear.

OUR vain Minds are naturally fruitful in nothing more than in Mistakes of God; for the most part we think not on him, and when we do it, we fancy him according to our own Affections, which are wholly perverse and crooked.

Men commonly judge it a vain Thing to spend much Pains and Time in worshipping him; and if they are convinced in this, and tied to it by the Profession of his Name, then they think all Religion is a Shell of external Diligences and Observances, and count it strange if this be not accepted. In the former Chapter, we find this, in the Prophet's Contest with the People about their Fasting, and their Opinion of it, he cuts up their Sacrifices, and lets them see what was within, the Skin was sound and look'd well, but being opened, the Entrails were found rotten. And here he enters into another Contest, against the latent Atheism of their Hearts; who after their Manner of seeking God, not finding him, and not being delivered, are ready to think that he either cannot, or will not help, and rather rest on that gross Mistake,

Mistake, than enquire into themselves for the true Cause of their continuing Calamities; they incline rather to think it is some Indisposition in God to help, than what it truly is, a Want of Reformation in themselves that hinders it. It is not likely, that they would say thus, nor speak it out in plain Terms, no, nor possibly not speak it formally and distinctly within, not so much as in their Thoughts, and yet they might have a confused dark Conceit of this. And much of the Atheism of Man's Heart is of this Fashion; not formed into resolved Propositions, but latent*, in confused Notions of it, scarce discernible by himself, at least, not searched out and discerned in his own Breast; there they are, and he sees them not: Not written Assertions, but flying Fumes, filling the Soul, and hindering it to read the Characters of God that are writ upon the Conscience.

Impenitency of Men, in any Condition, and particularly under Distress, is from the Want of clear Apprehensions and deep Persuasions of God, of his just Anger provoked by their Sin, and of his Sweetness and Readiness to forgive and embrace a returning Sinner; his sovereign Power, able to rid them out of the greatest Trouble; his Ear quick enough to hear the Cries, yea, the least whispering of a humbled Heart in the lowest Deep of his Sorrow, and his Arm long enough to reach them, and strong enough to draw them forth. *He that comes unto God must believe that he is*, says the Apostle. So certainly he that believes that, must come; it will sweetly constrain him, he cannot but come that is so persuaded. Were Mens Hearts much imprest with that Belief in all their Troubles, they would eye Men less and God more, and without Delay they would fasten upon the Church's Resolution, *Hos. vi. 1. Come and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up, &c.* And this is the very thing that the Prophet would here persuade to by this present Doctrine; and having
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* Ezek. viii. *Behind the Wall.*

impleaded them guilty, he sets them a Copy of humble Confession, *Ver. 12. &c.* Hence the frequent Complaints in the Psalm, *Why hidest thou thyself?* So *Psal. xxii. 2. I cry, but no bearing.*

In the Words of these two Verses, -these two Things appear, *A sad Condition*, and *the true Cause of it.*

The *Condition*, I think, I have Reason to call *sad*; 'tis God hiding his Face that he will not hear. This may be the *personal* Estate of his *Children*, or the *publick* Estate of his *Church*. From a Soul he hides his Face, not so much in the withdrawing of sensible Comforts, and sweet Tastes of Joy, which to many are scarce known, and to such as do know them, commonly do not continue very long, but it is a Suspension of that lively Influence of his Divine Power, for raising the Mind to the Contemplation of him, and Communion with him in Prayer and Meditation, which yet may be, where those Relishes and Senses of Joy are not. And the Returns of it appear in beating down the Power of Sin, or abating and subduing it, making the Heart more pure and heavenly, more to live by Faith in Christ, to be often at the Throne of Grace, and to receive gracious Answers, Supplies of Wants and Assistances against Temptations. Now when there is a Cessation and Obstruction of these, and such like Workings, the Face of God is *hid*, the Soul is at a Loss, seeks still and cannot find him whom it loveth. And in this Condition it cannot take Comfort in other Things, they are too low. 'Tis a higher and nobler Desire than to be satisfied, or diverted, with the childish Things, that even Men delight in that know not God. 'Tis a Love Sickness, which nothing can cure but the Presence and Love of the Party loved. Yea, nothing can so much as allay the Pain, and give an Interval of Ease, or recover a fainting Fit, but some good Word or Look, or at least some kind Message from him. Set thee in a Palace, and all Delights about thee, and a Crown on thy Head, yet
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if his Love has ceased on thy Heart, these are all nothing without him. It was after *David* was advanced to his Kingdom, and is in the *Psalms* of the Dedication of his Royal House, that he said, *Thou bideest thy Face, and I was troubled*, *Psal. xxx.* "All is dark, all the shining Marble, and the Gold and Azure, lose their Lustre, when thou art not here dwelling with me."

And thus for the Church, God is the proper Light, the Beauty, the Life of it. Deck it with all this World's Splendor, with all the Dressies of pompous Worship, these are not its genuine Beauty. And they provoke him, who is its Ornament, (as is *Jer. ii. 32.*) to depart. But give it the native Purity and Beauty of holy Ministers, and Ordinances well regulated, yet even that is but a dead Comeliness, Proportion, and Feature, without Life, when God is absent.

And for Matter of Deliverances and Working for her, which is here the thing in Hand, none can do any thing in that, not the wisest, nor the best of Men, with all their combined Wit and Strength, when he retires and comes not forth, doth not shew himself on the Behalf of his People, and work their Works for them.

These have, it may be, some kind of Prayer possibly, they offer at Extraordinaries, and yet obtain nothing, are not heard, the saddest Note in all the Song of *Lament. iii. 43, 44.* *Thou hast covered with Anger, and persecuted us; thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. Thou hast covered thyself with a Cloud, that our Prayer should not pass through.* Still, while that Door stands open, there is Hope and Remedy for other Evils, but that being shut, what can a People, or a Soul expect, but growing Troubles, one Sorrow upon the back of another; yea, that is the great Trouble, the *biding* of his Face, and refusing to hear. Observe *Job xxxiv. 29.* *When he giveth Peace, who then can make Trouble?* Now the other in the same Terms would have been, *when he makes Trouble, who can give Peace?* But instead 'tis, *when he hides his*

his Face, who then can behold him? No Peace but in beholding him, and nothing but Trouble; *that* is the grand Trouble when he *hides* his Face, and it is expressed in both Cases, whether it be personal or national, *whether against a Nation or a Man only.*

This is the Thing wherein the Strength of other Troubles lye, that gives them Weight, when they impart and signify thus much, that the Face of God is hid from a Soul or a People.

We ought to enquire if this be not our Condition at this time, hath he not hid his Face from us? Are we not left in the Dark, that we know not which Way to turn us? Either we must sit still and do nothing, for if we stir we do but rush one upon another, as in Darkness, contesting each to have the Way, and yet when we have it given us, we know not well which Way to go. And we think to be cleared, but it fails us, as in this Chapter, *Ver. 9. We wait for Light but behold Obscurity, for Brightness, but we walk in Darkness, we grope for the Wall as blind, and stumble at Noon-day as in the Night,* our Counsels strangely darkened, and no right understanding one of another. By all Debates little or no clearing of things attained, but our Passions are more enflamed, and Parties are further off, the Light of sound Judgment gone, and with it the Heat of Love, instead of which that miserable infernal Heat, Heat without Light, mutual Hatreds and Revilings, both Sides (verbally at least) agreeing in the general Terms both of their Desires and Designs, and yet falling out about Modes and Fashions of them. And to say no more of Parties, the Enemies of Religion on both Hands, Right and Left, in Action and in Power, and only those that love that, we conceive is the Way of Truth, standing as a naked Prey to whether of the two shall fail. Desires and Prayers we have presented, and see as yet no Appearance of an Issue, but further Confusions, even falling to Strife and Debate. And where are there any that look like Persons to stand in the Gap, lifting up holy Hands, without Wrath or Doubting?

Doubting? Hearts are still as unhumbled, and Lives as unreformed as ever, new intestine Troubles are most likely to arise, few or none laying it to Heart, and with calm lowly Spirits mourning before God for it, *Ephraim against Manasseh, and Manasseh against Ephraim, and they both against Judah, and for all this his Anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still.*

But generally Men ought to be less in descanting one on another, and more in searching and enquiring each into himself, even where it may seem Zeal, yet Nature and Passion may more easily let in the other; but this Self-search and Self-censure is an uneasy Task, the most unpleasant of all things to our carnal self-loving Hearts; but the heavy Hand of God shall never turn from us, nor his gracious Face turn towards us, till there is more of this amongst us. Most say their Prayers, and as they are little worth, they look little after them, enquire not what becomes of them. But, my Brethren, would we continue to call, and find favourable Answers, we must be more within, the Heart made a Temple to God, wherein Sacrifices do ascend; but that they may be accepted, it must be purged of Idols, nothing left in any Corner, though never so secret, to stir the Jealousy of our God, who sees through all. O happy that Heart, that is, as *Jacob's House*, purged, in which no more Idols are to be found, but the Holy God dwelling there alone as in his Holy Temple.

Behold, the Lord's Hand is not shortned, &c.] Much of all Knowledge lies in the Knowledge of Causes, and in practical things much of the right ordering them depends on it; the true Cause of a Disease found out is half the Cure. Here we have the Miseries of an afflicted People reduced to their real Cause; that which is not the Cause is first removed. *Behold the Lord's Hand is not shortned, &c.*

We are not only to be untaught this Error that we think not so, but to be taught to believe and think on that Truth, that God is still the same in Power and Goodness,

Goodness, to keep up the Notion of it in our Hearts, so we may call in past Experiences, and Relations of God's former workings for his People, and that with much Use and Comfort. He that brought forth his People out of *Egypt* with an outstretched Arm, as still they are reminded of that Deliverance by the Prophets, and called to look on it, as the great Instance and Pledge of their Restoremment by the same Hand, can again deliver his People when at the lowest, *Isa.* 4. 2. where the like Words to these.

And in this Belief we shall not faint in the time of deep Distress, our own, or the Church's; knowing the unalterable, invincible, infinite Power of our God, that all the Strength of all Enemies is nothing, and less than nothing to his, their Devices Knots of Straw. What is it that is to be done for his Church, if her and his Glory be interested in it? There remains no Question in point of Difficulty, that hath no Place with him. The more difficult, yea impossible for us, or any human Strength, the more fit Work for him; *because it is hard for you, shall it also be hard for me?* saith the Lord in the Prophet. And where *Jeremy* uses that Argument in Prayer, he hath his Answer returned in the same Words, as the Echo to the Prayer, resounding from Heaven, *Jer.* xxxii. 17. 27. and that in relation to the great Reduction of the *Jews* from *Babylon*, as is expressly promised, *Ver.* 36, 37, &c. And there the Prophet gives that first great Example of divine Power, the forming of the World, *Ver.* 17. *Behold thou hast made the Heaven and the Earth by thy great Power.*

Men think 'tis an easy common Belief, and that none doubt of the Omnipotency of God. But oh! the undaunted Confidence it would give to the Heart, being indeed firmly believed, and wisely used and applied to particular Exigencies. Men either doubt, or which, upon the Matter, for the use of it is all one, they forget who the Lord is, when their Hearts mis-give them, because of the Church's Weakness, and the Enemies Power. What is that upon the Matter?

Remember

Remember whose is the Church, God's, and what his Power is, and then see if thou canst find any Cause of Fear, *Isa. xli. 14. Fear not, thou Worm Jacob, and ye Men few, or weak Men of Israel (so the Word is) I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel.* So *Isa. li. 12. I, even I am he, that comforteth you, (there is the Strength of it) who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a Man that shall die, and of the Son of Man, which shall be made as Grass? And forgettest (Ver. 13.) the Lord thy Maker that stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of the Earth, &c.* Do but think aright on him, and then see if it be possible for thee to fear. All thy little Doubts and Despondencies of Mind will fly and vanish away before one clear Thought of thy God. Though the World were turning upside down, it shall go well with them that fear him.

And as this Apprehension of God strengthens Faith, so it quickens Prayer, it stirs thee up to seek to him for Help, when thou knowest and remembrest that there it is. There is Help in him, Power enough and no want of Readiness and good Will neither. If we apply ourselves to seek him aright, his Hand is as strong to save, and his Ear as quick to hear as ever. And in this that *his Ear is not heavy*, is both signified his speedy and certain Knowledge of all Requests sent up to him, and his gracious Inclination to receive them. Now these Persuasions do undoubtedly draw up the Heart towards him.

Again, as they strengthen Faith and quicken Prayer, they teach us Repentance, direct us inward to Self-examination, to the searching, and finding out and purging out of Sin, when Deliverance is delayed; for we are sure it stops not upon either of these on God's Part, either Shortness of his Hand, or Dulness of his Ear. Whence is it then? Certainly it must be somewhat on our Side that works against us, and prejudices our Desires. So here, thus you see the clear Aim of it, *Behold the Lord's Hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his Ear heavy that it cannot*

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not hear: What is it then that hinders? Oh! it is this, out of all doubt, *Your Iniquities separate*.

Old Sins unrepented of, and new Sins still added, as all unrepentant Sinners do; now this separates between you and God, for he is a holy God, a just God, hates Iniquity, and *between you and your God*, that pleads no Connivance at your Sins, but rather nearer Inspection, and sharper Punishment, *he will be sanctified in these that are near him*, in them especially; their Sin is greatened much by that Relation, *your God*, to sin against him so grossly, so continuedly, with so high a Hand, and so impenitent Hearts, not reclaimed by all his Mercies, by the Remembrance of his Covenant made with you, and Mercies bestowed on you, nor by the Fear of his Judgments threatned, nor by the Feeling of them inflicted, no returning nor relenting, not of his own People to their God. Sure, you must be yet more punished. *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore will I punish you for all your Iniquities.* “ I let others escape
 “ with many things that I cannot pass in you; you
 “ fast and pray it may be, you howl and keep a Noise,
 “ but you amend nothing, forsake not one Sin, for
 “ all your Sufferings, and for all your Moanings and
 “ Cries; you would be delivered, but do not part
 “ with one of your Lusts, or wicked Customs, even
 “ for a Deliverance, and so the Quarrel remains still.
 “ 'Tis that that separates, is a huge Wall betwixt
 “ us, betwixt me and your Prayers, and betwixt you
 “ and my helping Hand, and though I do hear, and
 “ could help, yet I will not, till this Wall be down;
 “ you shall not see me, nor find by any gracious Sign
 “ that I hear you.” This hides his Face that he will not hear.

This Way God hath established in his ordinary Methods with his People, though sometimes he uses his own Privilege, yet usually he links *Sin* and *Calamity* together, and *Repentance* and *Deliverance* together.

Sin separates and hides his Face, not only from a People that professes his Name, but even from a Soul that really bears his Name stamped upon it. Tho' it cannot fully, and for ever cut off such a Soul, yet in part, and for a time it may, yea to be sure, it will separate, and hide the Face of God from them. Their daily inevitable Frailties do not this, but either a Course of careless walking, and many little unlawful Liberties taken to themselves, that will rise and gather as a Cloud, and hide the Face of God. Or some one gross Sin, especially if often reiterated, will prove as a firm Stone-wall, or rather as a Brazen-wall, built up by their own Hands betwixt them and Heaven, and will not be so easily dissolved or broke down; and yet till that be, the Light of his Countenance, who is the Life of the Soul, will be eclipsed, and withheld from it.

And this considered, (besides that Law of Love that will forbid so foul Ingratitude, yet I say, this considered, even our own Interest) will make us wary to Sin: Though we were sure not to be yet altogether separated from the Love of God by it; yet thou that hast any Persuasion of that Love, darest thou venture upon any known Sin? Thou art not hazardless and free from all Damage by it, if thou hast need of that Argument to restrain thee. Then before thou run upon it, sit down and reckon the Expence, see what it will cost thee if thou do commit it. Thou knowest that once it cost the Heart-blood of thy Redeemer to expiate it, and is it a light Matter to thee? And though that paid all that Score, nothing thou canst suffer being able to do any thing that way, yet as an unavoidable present Fruit of it, it will draw on this Damage, "thou shalt be sure for a time, it may be for a long time, possibly most of thy time, near all thy Days it may darken much that Love of God to thee," which if thou dost but esteem of, think on it, it changes not in him, but a sad change will Sin bring on thee, as to thy Sight and Apprehension of it; many a sweet Hour of blest Communion with thy
Q God

God shalt thou miss, and either be dead, and stupid in that Want, and mourn after him, and yet find thyself, and Sighs, and Tears hold out, the Door shut, yea, a dead Wall raised betwixt thee and him, and at best much Straitning and Pains to take it down again; contrary to other Walls and Buildings, that are far more easily pull'd down than built up, but this a great deal easier built up than pull'd down. True, thy God could cast it down with a Word, and it is his free Grace that must do it, otherwise thou couldst never remove it, yet will he have thee feel thy own Handy-work, and know thy Folly. Thou must be at Pains to dig at it, and may be cost thee broken Bones in taking it down, Pieces of it falling heavy and sad upon thy Conscience, and crushing thee, as *David* cried out at that Work, *Psal. li.* for a healing Word from God, *Make me to hear Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* It will force thee to say, "O Fool that I was, what meant I? Oh! it is good keeping near God, and raising no Divisions. What are Sins? False Delights, but make ado, and have ado, a Man to provide his own Vexation." Now this Distance from God, and all this turmoiling, and breaking, and crying e're he appear again, consider if any Pleasure of Sin can countervail this Damage, sure, when thou art not out of thy Wits, thou wilt never make such a Bargain for all the Pleasure thou must make out of any Sin, to breed thyself all this Pain, and all this Grief, at once, to displease thy God, and displease thyself, and make a Partition between him and thee. Oh! sweet and safe Ways of Holiness, walking with God in his Company and Favour, he *that orders his Conversation aright, he sees the loving Kindness of the Lord*, it is shewn to him, he lives in the Sight of it.

But if any such Separation is made, yet, is it thy great Desire to have it removed? Why then there is Hope. See to it, labour to break down, and pray to him to help thee, and he will put to his Hand, and then it must fall, and in all thy Sense of Separation, look to him that *brake down the middle Wall,*

Eph. ii. There it is spoken of, as betwixt Men, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, but so as it was also between the *Gentiles* and God, separated from his People, and from himself, *Ver. 16. to reconcile both to God in one Body,* and *Ver. 18. Through him we have Access by one Spirit to the Father* and then he adds, that they were *no more Strangers and Foreigners*, dwelling on the other Side of the Wall, *παροίκοι*, as the Word is, *but fellow Citizens, &c.*

Oh! that we knew more what it were to live in this sweet Society, in undivided Fellowship with God. Alas! how little is understood this living in him, separated from Sin and this World, which otherwise do separate from him; solacing our Hearts in his Love, and despising the base muddy Delights that the World admires; hoping for that new *Jerusalem*, where none of these Walls of Sin, nor any one Stone of them are; and for that bright Day wherein there is no Cloud nor Mist to hide our Sun from us.

Now for the Condition of the Church, know Sin to be the great Obstructor of its Peace, making him to withdraw his hand, and hide his Face, and to turn away his Ear from our Prayers, and loath our Fasts, *Isa. i. 15. Jer. xiv. 12.* The Quarrel stands, Sin not repented and removed, the Wall is still standing; Oaths, and Sabbath-breaking, and Pride, and Oppression, and Heart-burnings still remaining. Oh! what a Noise of Religion and Reformation, all Sides are for the Name of it, and how little of the Thing? The Gospel itself is despised, grown stale, as trivial Doctrine. Oh! my Beloved, if I could speak many Hours without Intermission, all my Cry would be, *Repent and pray. Let us search and try our Ways, and turn unto the Lord our God.* Oh! what Walls of every one's Sin are set to it! Dig diligently to bring down thine own; and for these huge Walls of publick National Guiltinesses, if thou canst do nothing to them more, compass them about as *Jericho*, and look up to Heaven for their Downfal. Cry, "Lord, these we ourselves have reared, but without thee

**" who can bring them down? Lord, throw them
" down for us; a Touch of thy Hand, a Word of
" thy Mouth, will make them fall." Were we less
busy in Impertinencies, and more in this most need-
ful Work, it might do some Good; who knows but
the Lord might make his own Way clear, and return
and visit us, and make his Face to shine, that we
might be saved.**

A N

EXPOSITION

OF THE

C R E E D.

1 TIM. III. 9.

Holding the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience.

THAT which was the Apostle's Practice, as he expresses it, 1 Cor. ix. 22. is the standing Duty of all the Ministers of the same Gospel: *To the weak to become as weak, to gain the weak; and all Things to all Men, that if by any means they may save some.* And truly one main Part of Observance of that Rule, is in descending to the Instruction of the most ignorant in the Principles of Christian Religion. That I aim at, at this Time, is a very brief and plain Exposition of the Articles of our Faith, as we have them in that summary Confession. Not staying you at all on the Antiquity and Authority of it, both which are contest; whether it was pen'd by the Apostles, or by others in their Time, or soon after it, it doth very clearly and briefly contain the Main of their divine Doctrine.

But though it be altogether consonant with the Scriptures, yet not being a Part of the Canon of them, I chuse these Words as pertinent to our intended Explication of it: They are indeed here, as they stand in the Context, a Rule for Deacons; but with-

out question, taken in general, they express the great Duty of all that are Christians, *to keep the Mystery of Faith, &c.*

You see clearly in them a rich Jewel, and a precious Cabinet fit for it; the Mystery of Faith laid up, and kept in a pure Conscience. And these two are not only suitable, but inseparable, as we see in the first Chapter of this Epistle, *Ver. 19.* they are preserved and lost together, they suffer the same Shipwreck: The casting away of the one is the Shipwreck of the other; if the one perish, the other cannot escape. Every Believer is the Temple of God; and as the Tables of the Law were kept in the Ark, this pure Conscience is the Ark that holds the Mystery of Faith. You think you are Believers, you do not question that, and would take it ill that others should; it is very hard to convince Men of Unbelief, directly and in itself: But if you do believe this Truth, that the only Receptacle of saving Faith is a purified Conscience, then I beseech you, question yourselves concerning that; being truly answered in it, it will resolve you touching your Faith, which you are so loth to question in itself. Are your Consciences pure? Have you a living Hatred and Antipathy against all Impurity? Then sure Faith is there; for it is the peculiar Virtue of Faith to purify the Heart, *Acts xv.* and the Heart so purified is the proper Residence of Faith, where it dwells and rests as in its natural Place. But have you Consciences that can lodge Pride, and Lust, and Malice, and Covetousness, and such like Pollutions? Then be no more so impudent as to say, you believe, nor deceive yourselves so far as to think you do. The Blood of Christ never speaks Peace to any Conscience, but the same that it purifies *from dead Works to serve the living God,* *Heb. ix. 13, 14.* As that Blood is a Sacrifice to appease God's Wrath, so it is a Laver to wash our Souls, and to serve both Ends; it is, as was the Blood of legal Sacrifices, both offered up to God and sprinkled upon us, as both are express in the Apostle's Words there. Do not think that God will throw this
Jewel

Jewel of Faith into a Sty or Kennel, a Conscience full of Defilement and Uncleaness. Therefore if you have any Mind to these Comforts and Peace, that Faith brings along with it, be careful to lodge it where it delights to dwell, in a pure Conscience. Notwithstanding the unbelieving World mocks the Name of *Purity*; yet study you above all, that Purity and Holiness that may make your Souls a fit Abode for *Faith*, and that Peace which it worketh, and that Holy Spirit that works both in you.

Faith is either the Doctrine which we believe, or that Grace by which we believe that Doctrine: Here I conceive it is both met and united in the Soul, as they say of the Understanding in the Schools, *Intellegendo fit illud quod intelligit*; so Faith apprehending its proper Object, is made one with it. Faith is kept in a pure Conscience, that is, both that pure Doctrine of the Gospel which Faith receives, and that Faith which receives it, are together fitly placed and preserved, when they are laid up in a pure Conscience. The Doctrine of Faith cannot be received into nor laid up in the Soul, but by that Faith that believes it, and that Faith hath no Being without believing that Doctrine; and both are fitly called the *Mystery of Faith*. The Doctrine is mysterious, and it is a mysterious Work to beget Faith in the Heart to receive it: For the Things we must believe are very high and heavenly, and our Hearts are earthly and base till the Spirit renew them. In our Confession of Faith we have both exprest; the first Word is a Profession of Faith, which receives the Doctrine as true, *I believe*, and the Articles themselves contain the Sum of the Doctrine believed: And if we that profess this Faith have within us pure Consciences, wherein the Mystery of Faith, the Doctrine of Faith believed, and the Grace of Faith believing it, both together as one, may reside, dwell, and be preserved, then is the Text compleatly answered in the present Subject.

Remember then, since we profess this Faith, Which is the proper Seat of Faith? Not our Books, our

Tongues only, or Memories, or Judgment, but our Conscience; and not our natural Conscience defiled and stuffed with Sin, but renewed and sanctified by Grace, *holding the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience.*

I believe in God the Father.]

Not to insist here on the Nature of Faith, taking it as comprehensively as we can, it is no other but a supernatural Belief of God, and Confidence in him. Whether we call God, or the Word of God, the Object of Faith, there is no material Difference, for it is God in the Word, as revealed by the Word, that is that Object. God is that *veritas incomplexa* (as they speak) that Faith embraces; and the Word, the *veritas complexa*, that contains what we are to conceive of God, and believe concerning him. As, in the Gospel, the peculiar Object of that Faith that saves fallen Man, it is all one, whether we say it is Christ, or the Promises: For it is Christ revealed and held forth in the Promises that Faith lays hold on; *In him are all the Promises of God, Yea, and in him Amen.* So that it is all one Act of Faith that lays hold on Christ, and on the Promises, for they are all one, he is in them; and therefore Faith rests on them, because they include Christ who is our Rest and our Peace, as a Man at once receives a Ring and the precious Stone that is set in it. This once rightly understood, any further Dispute about placing Faith in the Understanding or the Will, is possibly in itself not at all needful, sure I am it is no Way useful for you. Take heed of carnal profane Presumption, for that will undo you; and labour to be sure of such a Faith as dwells in a pure Conscience, and it will be sure not to deceive you.

That Confidence which this Expression bears, believing in God, supposes certainly (as all agree) a right Belief concerning God, both that he is, and what he is, according as the Word reveals him, especially what he is relating to us; these three we have together, *Heb. xi. 6. He that cometh to God must believe*

believe that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 1. That he is. 2. To trust his Word, believing that he is true to his Promises, a Rewarder of them that seek him. 3. Upon these follows coming to him, which is this, believing in that God that the Psalm speaks of, that Reliance and Resting of the Soul upon him that results from that right Belief concerning him, and trusting the Testimony of his Word, as it reveals him.

We have discoursed of the Attributes of God elsewhere, as also of the Trinity, which is here expressed in these Words; *I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* That sublime Mystery is to be cautiously treated of, and rather humbly to be admired, than curiously dived into. The Day will come (truly a Day, for here we are beset with the gloomy nightly Shades of Ignorance) wherein we shall see him as he is. In the mean time let us devoutly worship him, as he has revealed himself to us; for this is the true Way to that heavenly Country, where we shall see him face to face. And it is our Interest here to believe the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, and to trust in them as such, for this is the Spring of all our Hope, that the middle of the three became our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit our Guide and Teacher, and the Father reconciles us to himself by the Son, and renews us by the Spirit.

Father.] First the Father of his only begotten Son Christ, and through him our Father by the Grace of Adoption. And so Christ does clearly insinuate the Order of our Filiation, *I ascend to my Father, and your Father, my God and your God.* He says, not to our Father, but to my Father and your Father, first mine, and then yours through me.

Almighty.] This also belongs to the Attributes of God, so we shall be but short on it here.

[*Almighty*, able in himself to do all things, and the Source of all Power in others, all the Power in the Creature being derived from him; so that it cannot altogether equal his, nor resist him, no, nor at all be without

without him. Whosoever they be that boast most in their own Strength in any Kind, and swell highest in Conceit of it, are yet but as a brittle Glass in the Hand of God; he cannot only break it to Pieces by the Strength of his Hand, but if he do but withdraw his Hand from supporting it, it will fall and break of itself.

Maker of Heaven and Earth.] The Son and the Spirit were, with the Father, Authors of the Creation; but it is ascribed to the Father particularly, in regard of the Order and Manner of their working. Whether natural Reason may evince the Creation of the World, we will not dispute; we know that he that had very much of that, and is the great Master of it in the Schools, could not see it by that Light; yet there is enough in Reason to answer all the false Cavils of profane Men, and very much to justify the Truth of this we believe. However we must endeavour to believe it by divine Faith, according to that of the Apostle, *By Faith we believe that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God.* And this is the first Article we meet withal in the Scriptures, and our Faith is put to it in a very high Point in the very Entrance.

In the Beginning God made the Heaven and the Earth, speaking like himself; it is not proved by Demonstrations nor any kind of Arguments, but asserted by the Authority of God: And with that which begins the Books of the Law, *John* begins his Gospel; that upon his Word, that by his Word made the World, we may believe that he did so.

This is fitly added to the Title of Almighty as a Work of Almighty Power, and therefore a clear Testimony of it, and both together will suit with our Profession of believing in him; for this is a main Support of our Faith, to be persuaded of his Power on whom we trust. *Our God is able to deliver us* (said they,) and *Abraham*, the Apostle says, *he offered up his Son*, accounting, or reasoning with himself, or lay-

ing his reckoning, that God was able to raise him from the dead.

We make more bold to speak out our own questioning the Love and good Will of God, because we think we have some Reason in that from our own Unworthiness, but if we would sound our own Hearts, we would often find in our Distrusts some secret Doubtings of God's Power. *Can God prepare a Table in the Wilderness?* said they, though accustomed to Miracles, yet still unbelieving. We think we are strongly enough perswaded of this, but our Hearts deceive us, *quæ scimus cum necesse non est, ea in necessitate nescimus*, S. Bern. The Heart is deceitful, Gen. xvii. 9. where he is speaking of trusting. It is not for nothing that God by his Prophets so often inculcates this Doctrine of his Power, and this great Instance of it, the Creation, when he promises great Deliverances to his Church, and the Destruction of their Enemies, Isa. xlv. 12 and li. 12. What can be too hard for him, that found it not too hard to make a World of nothing? If thou look on the Publick, the Enemies of the Church are strong; if on thyself, thou hast indeed strong Corruptions within, and strong Temptations without; yet none of these are almighty, as thy God is. What is it thou would have done, that he cannot do if he think fit? And if he think it not fit, if thou art one of his Children thou wilt think with him, thou wilt reverence his Wisdom, and rest satisfied with his Will. This is believing indeed; the rolling all our Desires and Burdens over upon an almighty God; and where this is, it cannot chuse but establish the Heart in the midst of Troubles, and give it a Calm within in the midst of the greatest Storms.

And try what other Confidences you will, they shall prove vain and lying in the Day of Trouble; he that thinks to quiet his Mind, and find Rest by worldly Comfort, is, as Solomon compares his Drunkard, as one that lies down in the midst of the Sea, that sleepeth on the Top of a Mast; he can have but unsettled Rest

Rest and Repose that lies there, *but he that trusteth in the Lord, is as Mount Sion that cannot be removed.* When we lean upon other Props besides God, they prove broken Reeds that not only fail, but pierce the Hand that leans on them, *Job xvii. 7.*

There is yet another Thing in this Article, that serves farther to uphold our Faith, that of Necessity he that made the World by his Power, doth likewise rule it by his Providence. It is so great a Fabrick, as cannot be upheld and governed by any less Power, than that which made it. He did not frame this World as the Carpenter his Ship, to put it into other Hands and look no more after it; but as he made it, he is the continual Pilot of it, sits still at the Helm and guides it, yea he commands the Winds and Seas, and they obey him. And this serves much for the Comfort of the Godly, but I cannot here insist on it.

And in Jesus Christ.]

The two great Works of God by which he is known to us, are Creation and Redemption which is a new or second Creation. The Son of God, as God, was with the Father, as the Worker of the former, but as God Man, he is the Author of the latter. St. *John* begins his Gospel with the first, and from that passes on to the second. *In the Beginning was the Word, &c. Ver. 1. By him were all things made.* But *Ver. 14.* the other is exprest, *The Word was made Flesh, and he dwelt among us **, Had a Tent like ours, and made of the same Materials. He adds, *He was full of Grace and Truth*, and for that End, as there follows, *that we might all receive of his Fulness, Grace for Grace.* And this is that great Work of new Creation; therefore the Prophet *Isaiab* Chap. li. 16. foretelling this great Work from the Lord's own Mouth, speaks of it in these Terms, *That I may plant the Heavens, and lay the Foundation of the Earth, and say unto Sion, thou art my People.* That making of a new People to himself in Christ, is as the framing of Heaven

* *Εκλήρωσιν.*

Heaven and Earth. Now this Restoremēt by Jesus Christ, supposes the Ruin and Misery of Man by his Fall, that Sin and Death under which he is born. This we all seem to know and acknowledge, and well we may; for we daily feel the woeful Fruits of that bitter Root; but the Truth is, the greatest Part of us are not fully convinced, and therefore do not consider of this Gulf of Wretchedness into which we are fallen. If we were, there would be more Cries amongst us for Help to be drawn out and delivered from it; this great Deliverer, this Saviour would be of more Use, and of more Esteem with us. But I cannot now insist on that Point.

Only consider that this makes the Necessity of a Mediator. The Disunion and Distance, that Sin hath made betwixt God and Man, cannot be made up but by a Mediator, one to come betwixt; so that there is now no believing in God the Father, but by this believing in Jesus his Son, no appearing without Horror, yea without Perdition before so just a Judge highly offended, but by the Intervention of so powerful a Reconciler, able to satisfy and appease him, and he tells it us plainly and graciously, that we mistake not our Way, *No Man comes unto the Father but by me.*

Few are our Thoughts concerning God, and returning to him, but if we have any, this is our Unhappiness that naturally we are subject to leave out Christ in them,

We think there is something to be done, we talk of Repentances, and Prayers, and Amendments, though we have not these neither; but if we had these, there is yet one thing necessary above all these, that we forget, there is absolute need of a Mediator to make our Peace, and reduce us into Favour with God, one that must for that End do and suffer for us, what we can neither do nor suffer; though we could shed Rivers of Tears, they cannot wash out the Stain of any one Sin; yea, there is some Pollution in our

our very Tears; so that they themselves have need to be washed in the Blood of Jesus Christ. *[Our Jesus Christ.]* Our anointed Saviour, anointed to be our King, our great High Priest, and our Prophet, and in all these our Saviour; our Prophet to teach us the Way of Salvation; our Priest to purchase it for us; and our King to lead and protect us in the Way, and to bring us safe to the End of it. Thus is his Name full of Sweetness and Comfort, *mel in ore, in aure melos, in corde medicina*, as Bernard speaks. It is a rich Ointment, and in the preaching of the Gospel, an Ointment poured forth, diffusing its fragrant Smell, for which the Virgins, the chaste purified Souls of Believers love him, such as have their Senses exercised, as the Apostle speaks, their spiritual smelling not obstructed with the Pollutions of the World; but quick and open to receive and be refreshed with the Smell of this precious Name of Jesus Christ.

[His only Son.] Other Sons he hath, Angels and Men by Creation and Adoption, but this his only begotten Son as God, by eternal and ineffable Generation, and as Man peculiarly the Son of God, both in regard of his singular and unexampled Conception by the Holy Ghost, and by that personal Union with the Deity, which accompanied that Conception, and by that Fulness of all Grace which flowed from that Union. The unfolding of these would require a long time, and after all, more would remain unsaid and unconceived by us; for *his Generation who can declare?*

Let us remember this, that our Sonship is the Product of his, *Joh. i. 14. He is the only begotten Son of God*; and yet, *Ver. 12, To as many as received him he gave this Privilege to be the Sons of God.*

[Our Lord.] Both by our loyal Subjection to him, and our peculiar Interest in him, these go together; willing Subjection and Obedience to his Laws is an inseparable Companion, and therefore a certain Evidence of our Interest in his Grace.

Conceived

Conceived by the Holy Ghost.]

This is that great Mystery of Godliness; God manifested in the Flesh; the King of Glory after a manner divesting himself of his Royal Robes, and truly putting on the Form of a Servant, the Holy Ghost framing him a Body in the Virgin's Womb; not that it was impossible to have made his human Nature sinless in the ordinary way (though the Schools usually give that Reason) but that by that miraculous and peculiar Manner of Birth, he might be declared more than Man, as being a Way more congruous both to the Greatness of his Person, and the Purity of his human Nature.

Born of the Virgin Mary.]

He was not only of the same Nature with Man, which he might have been by a new created Humanity, but of the same Stock, and so a fit Saviour, a near Kinsman, as the Word, that in *Hebrew* is a Redeemer, doth signify Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh. We see then the Person of our Mediator very fit for that his Office, having both the Natures of the Parties at Variance which he was to reconcile. And this happy Meeting of God and Man in the Person of Christ, to look no further, was a very great Step to the Agreement, and a strong Pledge of its Accomplishment. To see the Nature of Man that was an Enemy, received into so close Embraces with the Deity, as within the Compass of one Person, promised infallibly a Reconcilement of the Persons of Men unto God. There the Treaty of Peace began, and was exceedingly promoted by that very Beginning, so that in it, there was a sure Presage of the Success, It was indeed as they say of a good Beginning, *Dimidium facti*. Had God and Man treated any where but in the Person of Christ, a Peace had never been concluded, yea it had broke up at first; but being in him, it could not fail, for in him they were already one, one Person, so there they could not but agree, *God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself.*

2. Considering

2. Considering the Work to be done in this Agreement, as well as the Persons to be agreed; it was altogether needful that the Undertaker should be God and Man*; the Mediation was not a bare Matter of Word, but there was such a Wrong done as required a Satisfaction should be made, (we speak not what God might absolutely have done, but what was to be done suitable to God's End, that was for the joint Glory of Justice and Mercy, *That Mercy and Truth might meet, and Righteousness and Peace kiss each other*;) and because the Party offending was not able for it, he that would effectually suit for him, must likewise satisfy for him. And this Jesus Christ did, as here follows. Now that he might do this, it was necessary that he should be God able to save, and Man fit to save Man; Man that he might suffer, and God that his Suffering might be satisfying; Man that he might dy, and God that his Death might have Value to purchase Life to us.

The Son was fit to be incarnate for his Work, the middle Person in the Godhead to be Man's Mediator with God. That we had lost was the Dignity of the Sons of God, and therefore his *only Son*, only fit to restore us to it: The Beauty defac'd in us was the Image of God; therefore the repairing and reimpairing, a fit Work for his purest and perfectest Image, his Son, the Character of his Person.

Now this Incarnation of the Word, the Son of God, is the Foundation of all our Hopes; the Sense of that great Promise, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head*: And many others of the same Substance in the Prophets; the great Salvation so often foretold, and so long expected by the Jews. When this was fulfilled, that a Virgin did conceive by the Holy Ghost, *Then did the Heavens drop down Righteousness from above, and the Earth bring forth Salvation*, Isa. xlv. This seems to be that which the Church did so earnestly wish, *Oh that thou wert my Brother*, Cant. viii.

Suffer

* *Humana divinitas & divina humanitas.*

Suffered under Pontius Pilate.]

Though all his Life was one continual Act of suffering, from his living in the Cratch to his hanging on the Cross; yet because of the Briefness of this Confession, as likewise because this last Act was the greatest and most remarkable of his Sufferings, and the Scripture itself doth (as such) mention it most frequently, therefore it is here immediately subjoin'd to the Article of his Birth.

It is not for nothing that we have the Name of the *Roman* Judge here exprest, under whom he suffered; though it is nothing to his Credit, yet it is to the Credit of Divine Wisdom. Even this, considering the Nature and End of Christ's Death, being to satisfy a pronounced Sentence of Justice; though for others, it was a very agreeable Circumstance that he should not be suddenly or tumultuarily murdered, but be judicially, though unjustly, condemned.

Crucified.] Besides, it made his Suffering more publick and solemn; and the Divine Providence ordered this, that he should suffer under a *Roman* Judge, and so fall under this *Roman* kind of Punishment, being in itself a very shameful and painful kind of Death, and by the Sentence of the Law accursed, that we might have the more Evidence of our Deliverance from that Shame, and Pain, and Curse, that was due to us; *The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him*, says the Prophet, *and by his Stripes we are healed.*

Suffered.] That he died, and what kind of Death you see is exprest: But as many particular Sufferings of his Body are not here mentioned, so none of those of his Soul, but all comprehended in this general Word, *He suffered.* Those were too great to be duly exprest in so short a Form, and therefore are better exprest by supposing them, and including them only in this, *He suffered.* As he that drew the Father among others, beholding the sacrificing of his own Daughter, signified the Grief of the rest in their Gestures, and Visages, and Tears, but drew the

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Father

Father vailed; so here the crucifying and Death of our Saviour are exprest, but the unspeakable Conflicts of his Soul are vailed under the general Term of Suffering. But sure that invisible Cup that came from his Father's Hand was far more bitter than the Gall and Vinegar from the Hand of his Enemies; the piercing of his Soul far sharper than the Nails and Thorns: He could answer these sweetly with *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* But these other Pangs drew from him another kind of Word, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.*

Died.] No less would serve, and therefore he was *obedient even unto the Death*, as the Sentence against us did bear, and the Sacrifices of the Law did prefigure. When the Sacrifices drew back and went unwillingly to the Place, the Heathens accounted it an ill Presage: Never sacrifice more willing than Christ, *I lay down my Life for my Sheep*, (says he) *and no Man taketh it from me, As a Sheep before the Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth*, Isa. l. *He gave his Back to the Smiters, &c. For this Hour came I into the World*, says he. And this his Death is our Life, though by it we are not freed from this temporal Death; yet, which is infinitely more, we are delivered from eternal Death, and, which is yet more, entitled to eternal Life; and therefore do no more suffer this temporal Death as a Curse, but enjoy it as a Blessing, and may look upon it now (such as are in Christ, none other) not only as a Day of Deliverance, but of Coronation; the Exchange of our present Rags for long white Robes, and a Crown that fadeth not away.

Buried] For the further Assurance of his Death, and Glory of his Resurrection, as likewise to commend the Grave to us, as now a very sweet resting Place, he hath warmed the cold Bed of the Grave to a Christian, that he need not fear to ly down in it, nor doubt that he shall rise again, as we know and are after to hear that he did.

Descended

Descended into Hell.] The more Noise hath been about this Clause, I shall make the less. The Conceit of the Descent of Christ's Soul into the Place of the damn'd, to say no more nor harder of it, can never be made the necessary Sense of these Words; nor is there any either Ground in Scripture, or any due End of such a Descent, either agreed on, or at all alledgeable to persuade the chusing it as the best Sense of them. Not to contest other Interpretations, I conceive with Submission, that it differs not much (possibly nothing) from the plain Word of his *Burial*. Not that the Author or Authors of this so brief a Confession, would express one Thing by divers Words, but that it may be, in the antientest Copies, only the one of them hath been in the Text; and in after Copies, in Transcribers Hands, the other hath crept into it out of the Margin. But retaining it by all means as it is, it may signify the Abode and Continuance of Christ's Body in the Grave; in which Time he seem'd to have been swallowed up of Death, and that the Pit had shut her Mouth on him: but it appeared quickly otherwise; for, *the third Day he arose from the Dead*.

These are great Things indeed that are spoken concerning Jesus Christ, his Birth and Sufferings; but the greater our Unhappiness, if we have no Portion in them. To hear of them only, and to enjoy nothing of them, is most miserable; and thus it is through our Unbelief. Were it as common to believe in him, as to repeat these Words, or to come to Church and hear this Gospel preached, then you would all make a pretty good Plea on it; but believe it, it is another kind of thing to believe than all that, or than any thing that the most of us yet know. My Brethren, do not deceive yourselves; that common High-way Faith will not serve, you are for all that still Unbelievers in Christ's Account; and if so, for all the Riches of Comfort that are in him, you can receive none from him. It is a sad Word that he says, *Because ye believe not in me, ye shall dy in your*

Sins; " Though I died for Sins, not mine but others, yet you remaining in Ungodliness and Unbelief, that shall do you no good, ye shall dy in your Sins for all that." It is such a Faith as endears Christ to the Soul, unites into him, makes Christ and it one, that makes all that is his to become ours; then we shall conclude aright, Christ hath suffered, therefore I shall not. As he said to them that came to take him, *Is it I you seek? then let these go free*; so to the Law and Justice of God, " Seeing you have sought and laid hold on me, and made me suffer, let these go free that lay hold on me by Faith; if you have any thing to say to them, I am to answer for them, yea I have done it already."

2. You that believe and live by this Death, be often in reviewing it, and meditating on it, that your Souls may be ravished with the Admiration of such Love, and warm'd with a reflex Love to him *. Other Wonders, as you say, last for a while, but this is a lasting Wonder, not to the Ignorant, (the Cause of Wonder at other Things, is Ignorance indeed) but this is an everlasting Wonder to those that know it best, viz. to the very Angels. Let that loved Jesus be fixed in your Hearts, who was for you nailed to the Cross †. St. Bernard wonders that Men should think on any thing else; *quantæ insanie post tanti Regis adventum aliis negotiis, &c.* Sure it is great Folly to think and esteem much of any thing here, after his appearing; the Sun arising drowns all the Stars. And withal, be daily crucifying Sin in yourselves, be avenged on it for his sake, and kill it because it killed him.

3. Will you think any thing hard to do or suffer for him, that undertook and performed to the full so much for you ‡? If you had rather be your own than Christ's

* *Mira Dei dignitas, mira indiguitas nostra.*

† *Donc totus fixus in corde, qui totus fixus in cruce.*

‡ *Intolerabilis est impudentia, ut ubi se eximio: nixit majestas, commiculus infestetur & intamejcat.*

Christ's, much good do it you with yourselves; but know, that if you are not Christ's but your own, you must look for as little of him to be yours. If ye be your own, you must bear all your own Sins, and all the Wrath that is due to them. But if you like not that, and resolve to be no more your own but Christ's, then what have you to do but chearfully to embrace, yea earnestly to seek all Opportunities to do him Service?

4. These are the Steps of Christ's Humiliation; look on them then so, as to study to be like him particularly in that: Surely the Soul that hath most of Christ, hath most Humility. It is the Lesson he peculiarly recommends to us from his own Example, which is the shortest and most effectual way of teaching. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart.* He says well, "Let Man be ashamed to be any longer proud, for whom God himself humbled himself so low*." He became humble to expiate our Pride, and yet we will not banish that Pride that undid us, and follow that Way of Salvation, which is Humility. Jesus Christ is indeed the Lilly of the Vallies, he grows no where but in the humble Heart.

Rise again the third Day.]

When humbled to the lowest, then nearest his Exaltation, as *Joseph* in the Prison. He could dy, for he was a Man, and a Man for that Purpose, that he might dy; but he could not be overcome by Death, for he was God, yea, by dying, he overcame Death, and so shew'd himself truly the Lord of Life. He strangled that Lion in his own Den. The Whale swallowed *Jonah*, but it could not digest him: it was forced to cast him up again at the appointed Time, the same with the Time here specified, wherein the Prophet was a Figure of this great Prophet Jesus Christ. The Grave hath a terrible Appetite, devours all, and still cries, *Give, give, and never hath enough*, as *Agur* says; yet for all its Appetite, Christ

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was

* *Erubescat homo superbus esse, propter quem humilis factus est Deus*

was too great a Morfel for it to digest, too strong a Prisoner for all its Bars and iron Gates to keep him in. *It was impossible he should be holden of it,* says St. Peter, Acts ii.

He hath made a Breach through Death, opened up a Passage on the other Side of it into Life, though otherwise indeed *vestigia nulla retrorsum*. They that believe, that lay hold on him by Faith, they come through with him, follow him out at the same Breach, pass through Death into Heaven; but the rest find not the Passage out, it is as the Red Sea, passable only to the *Israelites*, therefore they must of Necessity sink quite downwards through the Grave into Hell, through the first Death into the second, and that is the terriblest of all: That Death is indeed what one called the other, *The most terrible of all Terribles, The King of Terrors*, as it is in *Job*.

Now the only Assurance of that happy second Resurrection to the Life of Glory hereafter, is the first Resurrection here to the Life of Grace; *Blessed are they that are Partakers of the first Resurrection, for on such the second Death hath no Power*. For the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is to the Believer, the Evidence of his Redemption compleated, that all was paid by Christ as our Surety, and so he set at Liberty, (which the Apostle teaches us, when he says, *He arose for our Righteousness*; and again, *It is God that justifies, who shall condemn; it is Christ that died, or rather that is risen again.*) Nor is it only the Pattern and Pledge of a Believer's Resurrection, but it is the Efficient both of that last Resurrection of his Body to Glory, and of the first, of his Soul to Grace.

The Life of a Believer is derived and flows forth from Christ as his Head, and is mystically one Life with his, and therefore so, as himself expresseth it, *because I live, ye shall live also*, Apoc. i. 8. Therefore is he called the *first begotten from the dead*, and the *beginning*, *Ἐν πᾶσιν πρωτεύων* Col. i. 15. He is first in all, and from him spring all those Streams that make
glad

glad the City of God. Therefore the Apostle, in his Thanksgiving for our new Life and lively Hopes, leaves not out that, *Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; that is the Conduit of all. And he expresses it in the same Place, that *We are begotten again to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead*. But, alas! we prejudice ourselves of all that rich Comfort that is wrapt up in this, by living to ourselves and our Lusts, and to the World, having not our Consciences purified from dead Works. How few of us are there that set that Ambition of Paul before us, *desiring above all things to know him, and the Power of his Resurrection*. To be made conformable, that is the Knowledge, as he there expresses it, a lively experienced Knowledge of that Power.

2. This, rightly considered, will answer all our Doubts and Fears in the Church's hardest Times; when in its Deliverance there appears nothing but Impossibilities; so low that its Enemies are persuaded to conclude, that it shall never rise again, and its Friends are oppressed with fearing so much: Yet he that brought up his own Son Jesus from the dead, can and will restore his Church, for which he gave that his only begotten Son to the Death. *Son of Man*, says he, *can these dry Bones live?* (thus often looks the Church's Deliverance, which is there the proper Sense.) The Prophet answered most wisely, *Lord, thou knowest*, "'tis a Work only for thee to "know and to do;" and by his Spirit they were revived. And as here it looked hopeless, as the Disciples thought they were at giving it over, and blaming almost their former Credulity, *We thought this should have been he that should have delivered Israel; and besides all this, to Day is the third Day*. True the third Day was come, but it was not yet ended; yea, he rose in the Beginning of it, though they yet knew it not, nor him present to whom they spake: But toward the End of it, they likewise knew that he was risen, when he was pleased to dis-

cover himself to them. Thus, though the Enemies of the Church prevail so far against it, that it seems buried, and a Stone laid to the Grave's Mouth, yet it shall rise again, and at the very fittest, the appointed Time, as Christ the third Day. Thus the Church expresses her Confidence, *Hof. vi. 1, 2. In the third Day he will raise us up.* Whatsoever it suffers, it shall gain by it, and be more beautiful and glorious in its Restoremēt*.

He ascended into Heaven.] He rose again, not to remain on Earth as before, but to return to his Throne of Majesty, from whence his Love drew him, according to his Prayer, *Job. xvii.* which was a certain Prediction of it. He had now accomplished the great Work he came for, and was therefore by the Covenant and Transaction betwixt his Father and him, to be exalted to his former Glory; the same Person that before, but with the Surcease of another Nature, which he had not before, and of a new relative Dignity, being to sit as King of his Church, which he had purchased with his Blood.

And to express this, it is added, that *he sits at the Right Hand of God, Psal. cx. 1. &c. Eph. i. 20, 21, &c.* By which, according to its allusive Sense, is expressed, not only his matchless Glory, but his Dominion and Rule as Prince of Peace, the alone King of his Church, her supreme Lawgiver and mighty Protector, and Conqueror of all his Enemies, ruling his holy Hill of Zion with his golden Scepter of his Word, and breaking his Enemies the strongest of them in pieces, with the *Iron Rod* of his Justice, as we have it in the 2d Psalm. They attempt in vain to unsettle his Throne, it is very far out of their Reach, as high as the Right Hand of God; *For ever, O God, thy Throne is established in Heaven.* What Way is there for the Worms of this Earth to do any thing against it?

As in these is the Glory of Christ, so they contain much Comfort of a Christian. In that very Elevati-

tion

* *Mergas profundo, pulchrior exilit.*

tion of our Nature to such Dignity, is indeed, as the Ancients speak, *mira dignatio*, that our Flesh is exalted above all the glorious Spirits, the Angels; and they adore the Nature of Man, in the Person of Man's glorified Saviour, the Son of God. This Exaltation of Jesus Christ doth so reflect a Dignity on the Nature of Mankind; but the Right and Possession of it is not universal, but is contracted and appropriate to them that believe on him. *He took not on him the Nature of Angels*, says the Apostle, but *the Nature of the Seed of Abraham*. He says, not the Nature of Man, though it is so, but of the Seed of *Abraham*; not so much because of his Descent from that particular Stock after the Flesh, as in the spiritual Sense of *Abraham's* Seed, as it is at large cleared, *Rom. ix.* The rest of Mankind forfeits all that Dignity and Benefit that arises to their Nature in Christ, by their Distance and Disunion from him through Unbelief. But the Believer hath not only naturally one kind of Being with the Humanity of Christ, but is mystically one with the Person of Christ, with whole Christ, God-Man, and by virtue of that mysterious Union, they that partake of it, partake of the very present Happiness and Glory of Christ, they have a real Interest in whatsoever he is and hath, in all his Dignities and Power; and in that Sense they that are justified are glorified, in that Christ is exalted, they are so too in him. Where a Part, and the chief Part of themselves is, and is in Honour, there they may account themselves to be*. A Man is said to be crowned when the Crown is set upon his Head, now our Head Christ is already crowned.

In sum, Believers have in this ascending and en-throning of Christ, unspeakable Comfort through their Interest in Christ, both in Consideration of his present Affection to them, and his effectual Intercession for them; and in the assured Hope this gives them

* *Ubi portio mea regnat, ibi me regnare credo.*

them of their own after Happiness and Glory with him.

1. In all his Glory he forgets them not, he puts not off his Bowels with his low Condition here, but hath carried it along to his Throne; his Majesty and Love suit very well, and both in their highest Degree; * as all the Waters of his Suffering did not quench his Love. Nor left he it behind him buried in the Grave, but it arose with him being stronger than Death; so he let it not fall to the Earth when he ascended on high, but it ascended with him, and he still retains it in his Glory. And that our Flesh, which he took on Earth, he took up into Heaven, as a Token of indissoluble Love betwixt him and those whom he redeemed, and sends down from thence as the rich Token of his Love, his Spirit into their Hearts; so that these are mutual Remembrances. Can he forget his own on Earth, having their Flesh so closely united to him? you see he does not, he feels what they suffer, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* And can they forget him whose Spirit dwells in them, and records lively to their Hearts the Passages of his Love, and brings all those things to their Remembrance (as himself tells us, that Spirit would do) and so indeed proves the Comforter by representing unto us that his Love, the Spring of our Comforts? And when we send up our Requests, we know of a Friend before us there, a most true and a most faithful Friend that fails not to speak for us, what we say and much more; *he liveth*, says the Apostle, *to make Intercession for us*. This is the Ground of a Christian's Boldness at the Throne of Grace: Yea therefore is the Father's Throne the Throne of Grace to us, because the Throne of our Mediator Jesus Christ is beside it: He sits at his right Hand, otherwise it could be nothing to us but a Throne of Justice, and so in regard of our Guiltiness, a Throne of Terror and Affrightment, which we would rather fly from, than draw near unto.

Lastly,

* *Bene conveniunt, & in una sede noratur, majestas & amor.*

Lastly, as we have the Comfort of such a Friend, to prepare Access to our Prayers there, that are the Messengers of our Souls: so of this, that our Souls themselves when they remove from these Houses of Clay, shall find Admission there through him. And this he tells his Disciples again and again, and in them all his own, that their Interest was so much in his ascending to his Glory, *I go to prepare a Place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also.*

It will not be hard to persuade them that believe these things, and are Portioners in them, to set their Hearts on them, and for that End to take them off from all other things as unworthy of them, yea, it will be impossible for them to live without the frequent and sweet Thoughts of that Place where their Lord Jesus is. Yet it is often needful to remember them, that this cannot be enough done, and by representing these things to them, to draw them more upwards; and it is best done in the Apostle's Words, *If ye be risen with Christ, mind those things that are above, where he sits, &c.* If ye be risen with him, follow him on, let your Hearts be where he is; they that are one with him, the blessed Seed of the Woman, do find that Unity drawing them Heaven-wards: But, alas! the most of us are liker the accursed Seed of the Serpent, basely grovelling on this Earth, and licking the Dust; the Conversation of the Believer is in Heaven, where he hath a Saviour, and from whence he looks for him. Truly there is little of a true Christian here, (and that argues that there is little of the Truth of Christianity among us, who are altogether here) his Head in Heaven, and his Heart there, and these are the two Principles of Life. Let us then suit the Apostle's Advice, and so enjoy the Comfort he subjoins, that by our Affections above, we may know, *That our Life is hid with Christ in God, and therefore that when he, who is our Life, shall appear, we likewise shall appear with him in Glory.*

From

From thence he shall come to judge, &c.] We have in this to consider, 1. That there is an universal Judgment. 2. That Christ is the Judge. 3. Something to be added of the Quality of the Judgment; all the three we have together, *Acts xvii. 31.*

That it is, is we know, the frequent Doctrine of the Scriptures, and hath been ever the Belief of the Godly from the Beginning, as we may perceive by that ancient Prophecy of *Enoch*, recorded by *St. Jude*, and we are so to believe it as a divine Truth: And yet there is so much just Reason for it, that natural Men by the few Sparkles of Light in their Consciences, have had some dark Notions and Conjectures of it, as is evident in *Plato* and the *Platonicks*, and not only the Philosophers but the Poets: it may be too, that they have been helped by some scattered Glimmerings of Light concerning this, borrowed from the *Jews*, and traditionally past from Hand to Hand among the *Heathen*, and therefore disguised and altered after their Fashion.

If we be persuaded that there is a supreme Ruler of the World, who is most wise, and just, and good, this will persuade us not only that there is some other Estate and Being, than that we see here, appointed for Man, the most excellent, the reasonable Part of this visible World; but that there shall be a solemn judicial Proceeding, in entering and stating him in that after Being. The many Miseries of this present Life, and that the best of Men are usually deepest Sharers in them, though it hath a little staggered, not only wise Heathens, but sometimes some of the prime Saints of God, yet it hath never prevailed with any but brutal and debauch'd Spirits, to conclude against divine Providence, but rather to resolve upon this, that of Necessity there must be another kind of Issue, a final Catastrophe reducing all the present Confusions into Order, and making all Odds even, as you say *. It is true that sometimes here the Lord's right Hand finds out his Enemies, and is known by the Judgment

* *Cum res hominum tantâ caligine volvi.* Claud.

ment which he executes on them; and on the other Side, gives some Instances of his gracious Providence to his Church, and to particular godly Men even before the Sons of Men: But these are but some few Preludes and Pledges of that great Judgment, some he gives, that we forget not his Justice and Goodness, but much is reserved, that we expect not all nor the most here but hereafter. And it is certainly most congruous that this be done, not only in each particular apart, but most conspicuously in all together, that the Justice and Mercy of God may not only be accomplished, but acknowledged and magnified, and that not only severally in the several Persons of Men and Angels, but universally, jointly, and manifestly in the View of all, as upon one Theatre, Angels and Men being at once, some of them the Objects of that Justice, others of Mercy, but all of them Spectators of both. Each ungodly Man shall not only read, whether he will or no, the Justice of God in himself, and his own Condemnation, which most of them shall do before that time in their Soul's particular Judgment: But they shall then see the same Justice in all the rest of the condemn'd World, and the rest in them, and to the great Increase of their Anguish, they shall see likewise the Glory of that Mercy, that shall then shine so bright in all the Elect of God, from which they themselves are justly shut out, and delivered up to eternal Misery.

And on the other Side, the Godly shall with unspeakable Joy behold not only a Part as before, but the whole Sphere both of the Justice and Mercy of their God, and shall with one Voice admire and applaud him in both. 2. Besides, the Process of many Mens Actions cannot be full at the End of their Life, as it shall be at that Day; many have very large After-reckonings to come upon them for those Sins of others to which they are accessary, though committed after their Death, as the Sins of ill educated Children to be laid to the Charge of their Parents, the Sins of
such

such as any have corrupted, either by their Counsels, or Opinions, or evil Examples, &c.

2. *He*, the Lord Jesus shall be Judge in that great Day, the Father, and Spirit, and his Authority are all one, for they are all one God and one Judge; but it shall be particularly exercised and pronounced by our Saviour God-Man, *Jesus Christ*. That external Word by whom all things were made, by him all shall be judged, and so he shall be the Word in that last Act of Time, as in the first; he shall judiciously pronounce that great and final Sentence, that shall stand unalterable in Eternity: And not only as the eternal Son of God, but withal the Son of Man, and so sit as King, and invested with all Power in Heaven and Earth. *By that Man whom he hath appointed to judge the quick and the dead*, Acts xvii. 31. and Acts i. 11. *This same Jesus shall so come, in like Manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven*. The Powers of the World and of Hell are combined against his Throne, therefore they shall be his Footstool sitting on that Throne, and the Crown which he hath purchased for Believers, he shall set it on their Heads with his own Hand. This shall be exceeding Joy and Comfort to all that have believed on him, that their Redeemer shall be their Judge, he that was judged for them, shall judge them and pass Sentence according to that Covenant of Grace that holds in him, pronouncing them free from the Wrath which he himself endured for them, and Heirs of that Life that he bought with his dearest Blood.

And that gives no less Accession to the Misery of the Wicked, that that same Jesus whom they opposed and despised, so many of them as heard any thing of him, he shall sit upon their final Judgment, and pronounce Sentence against them, not partially avenging his own Quarrel on them, no Word of that, but most justly returning them the Reward of their Ungodliness and Unbelief; that great Shepherd shall thus make that great Separation of his Sheep from the Goats.

3 Of the Manner we have thus much here, that he shall come from Heaven, as the Scriptures teach us, *Matth. xxiv. 30.* he shall visibly appear in the Air, he shall come *in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory*, attended with innumerable Companies of glorious Angels that shall serve him, both in the congregating his Elect, and segregating them from the reprobate; but himself in the Brightness of his own Majesty, infinitely surpassing them all, *2 Thess. i. 7.* His first Coming was mean and obscure, suiting his Errand, for then he came to be judged; but that last Coming shall be glorious, for he comes to judge, and his Judgment shall be in Righteousness, *Acts xvii. 31.* * There shall be no mis-alledging, or mis-proving, or mis-judging there; all the Judgments of Men, whether private or judicial, shall be rejudged there according to Truth, such a Judge before whom all things are naked; and not only shall he know and judge all aright, but all they that are judged, shall themselves be convinced that it is so; then all will see that none are condemned but most deservedly, and that the Lord's Justice is pure and spotless in them that perish, as his Grace, without Prejudice to his Justice, it being satisfied in Christ for them that are saved. The Books shall be opened, those that Men so willingly, the most of them, keep shut and claspt up, and are so unwilling to look into, their own accusing Consciences: The Lord will proceed formally against the Wicked according to the Books; no Wrong shall be done them, they shall have fair Justice, and they shall see what they would not look upon before; when by seeing, that might have been blotted out, and a free Acquittance written in its stead. And that the Believer shall read in his Conscience at that Day, which through the Dimness of Faith and dark troubled Estate of his Soul, he many times could not read here below.

We are gaping still after new Notions, but a few things wisely and practically known, drawn down from

* *Iuste judicabit qui injuste judicatus est.* Aug.

from the Head unto the Heart, are better than all that Variety of knowing that Men are so taken up with; *Paucis literis opus est ad mentem bonam.* This and such like common Truths we think we both know and believe well enough; but truly if this great Point, touching the great and last Judgment, were indeed known and believed by us, it would draw our Minds to more frequent and more deep Thoughts of it; and were we often and serious in those Thoughts, they would have such Influence into all our other Thoughts, and the whole Course of our Lives, as would much alter the Frame of them from what they are. Did we think of this Gospel which we preach and hear, that we must then be judged by it, we would be now more ruled by it; but the Truth is, we are willingly forgetful of these things, they are melancholy pensive Thoughts, and we are content that the Noise of Affairs or any Vanities fill the Ear of our Minds, that we hear them not. If we be forced at some times to hear of this last Judgment to come, it possibly casts our Conscience into some little trembling Fit for the time, as it did *Felix*; but he was not, nor are we so happy, as to be shaken out of the Custom and Love of Sin by it: We promise it fair, as he did, some other time; but if that time never come, this Day will come, and they that shun to hear or think of it, shall then see it, and the Sight of it will be as terrible and amazing, as the timely Thoughts of it would have been profitable. It is no doubt an unpleasing Subject to all ungodly earthly Minds, but sure it were our Wisdom to be of that Mind now, that then we shall be forced to be of; we shall then read by the Light of that Fire that shall burn the World, the Vanity of all those things whereon we now dote so foolishly. Let us therefore be persuaded to think so now, and disengage our Hearts, and fix them on him who shall then judge us, *Kiss the Son*, &c. They are only happy that trust in him; that which is the Affrightment of others, is their great Joy and Desire; they love and long

long for that Day, both for their Saviour's Glory in it, and their own full Happiness, and that their Love to his appearing, is to them a certain Pledge of the Crown they are to receive at his appearing, *2 Tim. iv. 8.* at that Day, says the Apostle; this Day he esteems more of than all his Days, therefore he names it no otherwise than *that Day*: How may we know what Day it was he meant? his Coronation-day. But of all Men, sure the Hypocrite likes least the Mention and Remembrance of that Day; there is no Room for Disguises there, all Masks must off, and all things appear just as they are, and that is the worst News to him that can be.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.] God is both a Spirit and holy; but this Name, personally taken, is peculiarly that of the third Person, proceeding from the Father and the Son, by a Way that can neither be expressed nor conceived; holy in himself, and the Author and Cause of all Holiness in us.

It is neither useful nor safe for us to entangle our Thoughts in Disputes concerning this Mystery, but it is necessary that we know, and acknowledge, and believe in this *holy Spirit*; it is he in whom and by whom we believe: We cannot know God, nor the things of God, but by the Spirit of God, *1 Cor. ii. 11.* nor say that Jesus is God, but by the same Spirit, *1 Cor. xii. 3.* We know that this Holy Trinity co-operates in the Work of our Salvation; the Father hath given us to the Son, and the Son hath sent us his Spirit, and the Spirit gives us Faith, which unites us to the Son, and through him to the Father: The Father ordained our Redemption, the Son wrought it, the Holy Spirit reveals and applies it.

The remaining Articles have the Fruit of that great Work, the sending of the Son of God in the Flesh, his suffering, and dying, &c. what it is, and to whom it belongs; the Result of Christ's Incarnation and Death, *cui & cujus gratia*. Yea, the great Design of God in the other great Work, that of the first Creation, was this second; he made the World, that

out of it he might make this *elect World*, that is called his *Church*: The Son fell on Sleep, on a dead Sleep, indeed the Sleep of Death on the Cross, that out of his Side might be framed his Spouse, which is his Church. The Holy Spirit moving upon the Souls of Men in their Conversion, aims at this same End, the gathering and compleating of his Church; he is the Breath of Life that breath'd on these new Creatures that make up this Society. So then, this is as much as to say, I verily believe that God had such a Purpose in making the World, and in sending his Son into it, and they both in sending the Spirit, and the Spirit in his working to make a holy Church, a Number that should serve God here, and enjoy him in Eternity; and I believe that God cannot fall short of his End, that blessed Trinity doth not project and work in vain: I believe therefore there is such a Company, there is a *holy universal Church*; [universal] diffused through the several Ages, and Places, and Nations of the World; [holy] wash'd in the Blood of Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit; that it is, that it hath in all Ages continued from the Beginning, and shall continue to the End of the World, increasing still and growing to its appointed Perfection, amidst all the Enmities and Oppositions that it encounters in the World. *I send you forth*, says Christ, *as Sheep among Wolves*. The Preservation of the Church is a continuing Miracle, it resembles *Daniel's* Safety among the hungry Lions, but prolonged from one Age to another. The Ship, wherein Christ is, may be weather-beaten, but it shall not perish. So then, you see that this Confession is altogether no other but your Acknowledgment of God in himself, Three in One, and One in Three, and his Works of the Creation of the World, and Redemption of Man by his Son, made Man for that Purpose, and appropriate to them for whom it was design'd by his Holy Spirit; and with this Acknowledgment, our Reliance on this God as the Author of our Being and Well-being.

[*The Communion of Saints.*] This springs immediately from the former; If they make one Church, then they have a very near Communion together; they are one Body united to that glorious Head that is above; they have all one spiritual Life flowing from him: And this Communion holds not only on Earth and in Heaven apart, but even betwixt Heaven and Earth; the Saints on Earth make up the same Body with those already in Glory; they are born to the same Inheritance by new Birth, though the others are entred in Possession before them. This their common Title to spiritual Blessings, and eternal Blessedness, prejudices none of them; their Inheritance is such as is not lessened by the Multitude of Heirs, it is entire to each one, and that Grace and Salvation that flows from Christ, *the Sun of Righteousness*, is as the Light of the Sun where it shines, none hath the less because of others partaking of it. The Happiness of the Saints is called *an Inheritance in Light*, which all may enjoy without Abatement to any: They have each one their Crown; they need not, they do not envy one another, nor *Ottoman-like*, one Brother to kill another to reign alone; yea, they rejoice in the Happiness and Salvation of one another, they are glad at the Graces that God bestows on their Brethren, for they know that they all belong to the same first Owner, and return to his Glory; and that whatsoever Diversity is in them, they all agree and concenter in that Service and Good of the Church; and so what each one hath of Gifts and Graces belongs to all by virtue of this Communion. Thus ought each of them to think, and every one of them humbly and charitably so to use what he hath himself, and ingenuously to rejoice in that which others have, as the Apostle reasons at large, 1 Cor. xii.

I believe a holy Catholick Church, and the Communion of Saints.]

We may see the Worth and the Necessity of Holiness, how much it is regarded in the whole Work; for this very thing did Christ give himself for his

Church, *that he might sanctify it, &c.* *Eph. v. 26.* to the End of our Redemption: And if we look as far forward as Salvation, there perfect Holiness; nothing unclean shall enter that holy City, and *without Holiness no Man shall see God*: And look again as far back as our Election, *Eph. i. 4.* and these that are not Partakers of this, do but delude themselves, in dreaming of Interest in the rest: No washing in the Blood of Christ to Remission, but withal *by the Spirit to Sanctification*; no Comfort to the Unholy in their Resurrection, because no hope of that to follow on it, that follows here, eternal Life: No, without shall be Dogs. In the base and foolish Opinion of the World, Holiness is a Reproach, or at the best but a mean poor Commendation, as you speak of it disdainfully, a *good, silly, holy Body*; and Men are more pleased with any other Title: They had a great deal rather be called learned, or wise, or stout, or comely, than holy *. But God esteems otherwise of it, whose Esteem is the true Rule of Worth. That forfeited Place, *a glorious Church*: How? *Holy and without Blemish*; that is indeed the true Beauty of the Soul, makes it like God, and that is its Comeliness. We see the Lord himself delights to be known much by this Stile, and glorified by it, *Holy, Holy, Holy*, so *Exod. xv. Glorious in Holiness*; and the Spirit of God still called the *Holy Spirit*. How much then are they mistaken concerning Heaven, that think to find the Way to it out of the Path of Holiness, which is indeed *via regni*, the only Way that leads unto it. Reprove you of Unholiness, you say, you are not Saints. No? So much the worse, for they that mean to share in the Pardon of Sin, and eternal Life, must be such. If you be content still not to be Saints, go on; but know, that they that are not in some measure Saints in Grace here, shall never be Saints in Glory hereafter.

[*Pargiveness of Sins.*] Notwithstanding of Sins, there is a Necessity of Holiness, though not as meriting it,

as

* *Malum. audire O virum doctum, quam O virum bonum.* Sen.

as leading unto Happiness. But on the other Side, notwithstanding the highest Point of Holiness we can attain, there is a Necessity of this Forgiveness of Sins. Though Believers make up a holy Church and Company of Saints, yet there is a Debt upon them that their Holiness pays not; yea, they are so far from having a Superplus for a standing Treasure after all paid, that all the Holiness of the Saints together, will not pay the least Farthing of that Debt they owe. *As for me, I will walk in mine Integrity,* says David, *Psal. xxvi. 11.* How then, adds he, "this shall justify me sufficiently," no, *but redeem thou me, and be merciful to me;* so 1 Joh. i. 6, 7. *If we say, we have no Sin, we are Liars, &c. And walk in Darknes,* &c. And yet in the next Verse, though we do walk in the Light, yet is there need of the *Blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us from all Sin;* and so throughout the Scriptures. All the Integrity of the Godly under the Law did not exempt them from offering Sacrifice, which was the Expiation of Sin in the Figure, looking forward to that great and spotless Sacrifice, that was to be slain for the Sins of the World; and those that believe the Gospel, the Application of that justifying Blood that streams forth in the Doctrine of the Gospel, is not only needful to wash in for their cleansing in their first Conversion, but to be re-applied to the Soul, for taking off the daily contracted Guiltiness of new Sins. It is a Fountain opened and standing open for Sin and for Uncleaness, as that Sea of Brass before the Sanctuary, &c. They that are clean have still need of washing, at least, their Feet, as Christ speaks to St. Peter.

The Consideration of that precious Blood shed for our Sins, is the strongest Persuasive to Holiness, and to the avoiding and hating of Sin. So far is the Doctrine of Justification (right understood) from animating Men to Sin. But because of the woful Continuance of Sin in the Godly, while they continue in this Region of Sin and Death, therefore is there a

continual Necessity of new Recourse to this great Expiation. Thus St. *John* joins these two, *1 John ii. 1, 2.*

You think it an easy Matter, and a Thing that for your own Ease you willingly believe, the Forgiveness of Sins. It is easy indeed, after our Fashion, easy to imagine that we believe such a thing when we hear it, because we let it pass and question it not, we think it may be true, and think no farther on it, while we neither know truly what Sin is, nor feel the Weight of our own Sins: But where a Soul is convinced of the Nature of Sin, and its own Guiltiness, there to believe Forgiveness, is not so easy a Task.

In believing this Forgiveness of Sins, and so the other Privileges that attend it, there be these three Things gradually leading one to the other: 1. To believe that there is such a Thing, and that it is purchased by the Death of Christ, and so attainable by coming unto him for it. 2. By this the Soul finding itself ready to sink under the Burden of its own Sins, is persuaded to go to him, and lay over that Load on him, and itself withal resolves to rest on him for this Forgiveness, this is to believe in him *who is the Lord our Righteousness*. 3. Upon this believing on him for Forgiveness, follows a reflex believing of that Forgiveness; not continually and inseparably, especially if we take the Degree of Assurance somewhat high, but yet in itself it is apt to follow, and often in God's gracious Dispensation doth follow upon that former Act of believing, through the Clearness and Strength of Faith in the Soul, and sometimes withal, is back'd with an express peculiar Testimony of God's own Spirit: To believe and to grow stronger in believing, and to aspire to the Assurance of Faith is our constant Duty; but that immediate Testimony of the Spirit is an arbitrary Beam that God reserves in his own Hand, yet such a Gift as we may not only lawfully seek, but do foolishly prejudice ourselves and slight it, if we neglect to seek it, and want so rich a Blessing for want of asking, and withal, labouring to keep our Hearts in a due Dispose and
Frame

Frame for entertaining it. The keeping our Consciences pure, as much as may be, doth not only keep the comfortable Evidence of Pardon clearest and least interrupted within us, but is the likeliest to receive those pure Joys, that flow immediately into the Soul from the Spirit of God. The Testimony of our Conscience is (if we damp it not ourselves) our continual Feast, but that Testimony of the Spirit is a superadded Taste of higher Comfort out of God's own Hand, as it were a Piece of Heaven in the Soul, which he sometimes cheers it withal: Where he hath first given much Love and ardent Desires after himself, they are short of that Light, in the Fulness whereof we hope to dwell hereafter. But besides that, God is most free in that Particular, and knows what is fittest for us; the greatest part even of true Christians yet do not so walk, nor attend to that Spiritualness that is capable of such Visits.

The Resurrection of the Body.) The Comfort of these Privileges, opposed to those grand Evils that we feel or fear, Sanctification to the Power of Sin, Justification or Forgiveness to the Guilt of Sin, the Resurrection to temporal Death, and Life eternal to the second or eternal Death.

This is the raising of the self-same Body that is laid in the Dust, otherwise, the giving of a Body to the Soul again, must have some other Name, for *Resurrection* it cannot be called.

That God can do this, notwithstanding all imaginable Difficulties in it, have we not Proof enough in what he hath done; sure that which he did in the Beginning of Time, the framing the whole World of nothing, is more than a sufficient Pledge of this that is to be done in the End of Time.

That he will do it, we have his own Word for it, and the Pledge of it in raising his Son Jesus, therefore called *the first begotten from the dead*; this as relating to Believers who are one with him. The Resurrection of the Dead in general is an Act of Power, but to the Godly an Act of Grace, to the Wicked of

Justice ; both shall rise by the Power of Christ, but to the one as a Judge, and a Judge that shall condemn them ; to the other as their Head, and their Saviour. *Joseph's* two Fellow Prisoners were both taken out of the Prison, and at the same time, but the one to the Court, the other to the Gallows ; so in the Resurrection, *Joh. v. 29.*

The Confession of Faith being of such things as belong to Believers, and are their Happiness, therefore their Resurrection is particularly here intended, as we see eternal Life and Glory is subjoined to it.

Our Bodies are raised that were Companions and Partakers of our Good and Evil in our Abode upon Earth, that they may in Eternity be Companions and Partakers of our Reward : Those of the Ungodly to suit their condemned Souls, shall be filled with Shame, and Vileness, and Misery ; and those that were in their lower Estate here Temples of the Holy Ghost, shall be filled with that Fulness of Joy, that shall run over from the Soul unto them ; they shall be conform to the happy and glorious Souls to which they shall be united, yea to the glorious Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There shall then be nothing but Beauty, and Glory and Immortality in them that are now frail and mortal, and being dead, to putrify and turn to Dust. He shall change our vile Bodies, and make them like unto his most glorious Body ; but as *St. Bernard* says well, *If we would be sure of this, that our Bodies shall be conform to his, in the Glory to come, see our Souls be here conform to his, in that Humility which he so much manifested whilst he dwelt among Men ;* if we would that then our vile Body be made like his glorious Body, let our proud Heart now be made like his humble Heart.

Life eternal.] Our Confession of Faith ends in that which is the End of our Faith, our everlasting Salvation, or eternal Life ; of which, all that we can say is but stammering, and all our Knowledge and Conceiting of it but Ignorance, in regard of what it is ; yet so much we know, or may know of it, as, if we knew aright,

aright, would certainly draw us more into the Desires and Pursuit of it. The very Name of Life is sweet, but then especially as it is here meant, in the purest and sweetest Sense, for a truly happy Life *. For a Life full of Misery is scarce worth the Name of Life, and the longer it were, the worse; therefore the miserable Estate of damned Souls, though immortal in it, is called Death. So then by this *Life*, true and full Blessedness being meant, and then that added, that it is *eternal* Life, what can be imagined more to make it desirable.

So happy, that there shall not be the smallest Drop of any Evil or Bitterness in it, pure unmixt Bliss, nothing present in it that is displeasing, nor nothing wanting that is delightful; and everlasting, that when Millions of Years (if there were any such reckoning there) are rowled about, it shall be as far from ending as at the first.

A very little Knowledge of this blessed Life, would make us clean out of Love with the Life, that now we make such Account of: What can it be that ties us here? The known Shortness of this Life, were it more happy than it is to any, might make it of less Esteem with us; but then withal, being so full of Miseries and Sins, so stuffed with Sorrows round about us, and within ourselves, that if the longest of it can be called long, it is only the Multitude of Miseries in it, can challenge that Name for it. Such a World of bodily Diseases, here one's Head paining him, another his Stomach. †, some complaining of this Part, some of that, and the same Party sometimes of one Malady, sometimes of another; what Disappointments and Disgraces, and cross Encounters of Affairs; what personal and what publick Calamities, and then Sin the worst of all; and yet all cannot wean us. We cannot endure to hear nor think of removing; and the true Reason is, Unbelief of this eternal Life.

and

* *Non est vivere, sed valere, vita.*

† *Quam malè nobis convenit, nunc de ventre, nunc de capite, &c. h. c. coningere solet in alieno habitantibus.* Sen.

and the Neglect of those Ways that lead to it. Be persuaded at length to call in your Heart from the foolish Chace of Vanity, and consider this glorious Life that is set before you. Do you think the Provision you make for this wretched present Life worth so many Hours daily Pains, and give eternal Life scarce half a Thought in many Hours, possibly not a fixed serious Thought in many Days? sure if you believe there is such a thing, you cannot but be convinced, that it is a most preposterous unwise Course you take, in the Expence of your Time and Pains upon any thing else more than on Life eternal. Think what a sad thing it will be, think you, when your Soul must remove out of that little Cottage wherein it now dwells, not to be better'd by the Removal, but thrust out into utter Darkness; whereas, if ye would give up with Sin, and embrace Jesus Christ as your Joy and your Life, in him you would presently be put into a sure unfailing Right to this eternal Life; it is a pure Life, and Purity of Life here, is the only Way to it. *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.*

AN EXPOSITION OF THE

LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. VI. 9.

After this Manner therefore pray ye.

THE Malice and Slight of Satan, in Reference to good Actions, works first in attempting wholly to divert us from them; but if that take not, the next is to pervert their Use, and corrupt them so in doing, that they lose their Acceptance with God, and we consequently lose the Fruit and Comfort of them. And as there is no religious Exercise that he hath more Quarrel at, and owes greater Enmity to than Prayer, being the most constant Crosser of his Designs, there is none from which he more endeavours to estrange Men, either wholly to lay it down, or to frequent Cessations; or if that cannot be, but that the Light of Conscience still calls for somewhat at least that may pass with a Man for Prayer, yet if Satan can get it turned to Hypocrisy and Formality, he knows he need not fear it, for so it wants the Life of Prayer, and remains nothing but a dead Carcase, and therefore can neither please the living God, nor hurt him who is its Enemy.

Therefore

Therefore our Saviour here warns his Disciples to avoid, in praying, these two Evils, *the vain Ostentation of Hypocrites*, v. 5. and *the vain Reputation of the Heathen*, v. 7. not to think it Prayer to tumble out a Multitude of empty Words: And upon that takes Occasion to set this matchless Copy of Prayer, the Way of Example being the shortest and liveliest Way of teaching. These Words that are but the Entry, are not to be past; there is in them, 1. The Duty of Prayer supposed. 2. The prescribing of this Form. 1. *Pray.* 2. *After this Manner.*

The Use and Necessity of Prayer is taken for confest, as before, *Ver. vi. 7. When ye pray, and when thou prayest.* And the Consideration of this Exercise, and of this Pattern of it, is with good Reason accounted among the most necessary Principles of Religion; without it indeed all Religion withers and languishes. The Law of God is so pure and exact a Rule, that we cannot come near the Perfection of it, and therefore fall under its Curse. When we understand it so, that drives us to the Gospel, to seek Salvation there; and the Articles of the Gospel, of our Christian Faith, are so high and mysterious, that Nature cannot aright understand or believe them; and therefore both Law and Gospel drive us to Prayer, to seek of God renewing Grace to conform our Hearts in some Measure to the holy Law of God, and Faith to lay hold on Jesus Christ, and Salvation in him held forth to us in the Gospel. Prayer is not taken in its strict grammatical Sense, in which the Words used for it signify only Petition or Request; but as comprehending together with Petition, Confession and Thanksgiving, may be called briefly and plainly a *pious Invocation of God*; and not speaking abstractly of Prayer, but according to the Estate of fallen Man, it is very fit to add the express Mention of the Mediator, that is an Invocation of God in the Name of Christ; for it never ascends to God as pleasing Incense, but when it passeth through that golden Censer, and is perfumed with the sweet Odours of his

Merits

An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer.

Merits and Intercession. His Entrance into Heaven hath opened up the Way for our Prayers to come in, and there is no Access to the Throne of Grace, but by *that new and living Way*, as the Apostle speaks. But how much better is the frequent Practice than much Discourse, and Business in defining it, whatsoever is said aright in this, is for the other as its End, as *Gerson* hath it out of an ancient Philosopher, *Inquirimus quid sit virtus, non ut sciamus, sed ut boni efficiamur.* We enquire what Virtues are, not to know them, but to have them: And indeed to do otherwise is but answerable Employment to study the Nature of Riches, and talk of them, and remain poor, possessing none.

It is not needful to stay upon distinguishing Prayer, by the different Matter of Petitions, or things to be requested, which possibly some of the different Names of Prayer in Scripture do signify. This may suffice, that it be of such things as are conform to the Will and Promises of God, and desired with a suitable Disposition of Mind, and therefore I call it a *pious Invocation*. It is the highest Impudence to present God with unjust or frivolous Desires, *Et quæ scire homines nolunt Deo narrant*, Sen. We ought to reverence the Majesty of God, and regard that in our Requests. There is a Difference betwixt solemn Prayer, and sudden Ejaculations, but it is not a Difference in their Nature, but only in Continuance; the former is here meant, therefore of it, &c. Only this of the other, it is to be wished that it were more known, and more in Use with Christians, for it is (no doubt) a very happy Means of preserving the Heart in holy Temper, and constant Regard of God in all a Man's Actions, and is a main Point of answering the Apostle's Word, *pray continually*; when in company, and apart a Man useth secret short Motions of the Soul to God, that may be very frequent in the Day, and Night, whereas Men's Callings, and natural Necessities, and Employments allow them but some certain Parcel of both for solemn Prayer; and these frequent Looks of the Heart to Heaven exceedingly

ingly sweeten and sanctify our other Employments, and diffuse somewhat of Heaven through all our Actions. Solemn Prayer at fit times is a visiting of God, but this were a constant walking with him all the Day long, lodging with him in the Night, *When I awake,* says David, *I am still with thee.* And these sudden Dartings of the Soul Heaven-wards, may sometimes have more Swiftnes and Force than larger Supplications, having much Spirit, as it were, contracted into them; and they would no Doubt, if used, be answered with frequent Beams of God's Countenance returned to the Soul, as it were in Exchange; for though whole Life-times of Prayer are not worthy the least of those, yet it pleases God thus to keep Interchange with these Souls that love him, and for the Ejaculations of their Desires to him, looks back on them, and so they interchange as it were sudden Glances of Love that answer one another. The Lord is pleased to speak thus himself, and the Souls that know this Love, understand it, *Thou hast ravish'd my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse, with one of thine Eyes.* But though such Looks in Ejaculation will refresh a Soul inflamed with the Love of God, yet it suffices not, they must have Times of larger and more secret Converse with their beloved, and particularly in the Exercise of solemn continued Prayer, and if cut short of it at any time, will miss it as much, as an healthful Body its accustomed Repast.

But it would seem, that though there may be some Reason for Confession and Thanksgiving, yet that which hath more peculiarly the Name of Prayer, Petition, is superfluous: He that knows our Wants better than ourselves, and what is fittest to bestow upon us, and forgets not all, what need we put him in mind, and follow him with so many Suits?

This indeed is a strong Reason against vain Babblings in Prayer, and imagining to be heard merely for long Continuance, and Multitude of Words; and our Saviour himself doth here use it so, *Ver. 8.* but withal he shews us clearly, that it makes nothing a-

gainst the Exercise of Prayer, in that he adds immediately upon these Words, *After this Manner therefore pray ye.*

Although the Lord knows well our Wants, and doth according to his own good Pleasure, yet there is for Prayer, 1. *Duty.* 2. *Dignity.* 3. *Utility.*

1. *Duty.* We owe this Homage to God, not only to worship him, but particularly to offer up our Supplications, and to acknowledge him our King, and Ruler of the whole World, and to testify our Dependence upon him, as the Giver of every good Gift; it is not because he is unwilling, and loth to give, *For he gives liberally, and upbraids none,* yet says the Apostle there, *If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask it.* So of all Wants, that which Thanksgiving doth acknowledge after Receipt, Supplication doth beforehand; his Power, and Truth, and Goodness, &c. this is his still, the God that *beareth Prayer*, and therefore this Homage is due to him, *To him shall all Flesh come.*

2. *Dignity.* This is the Honour of the Saints, that they are admitted to so near and frequent Converse with the great God, that they do not only expect from him, but may so freely speak to him of their Desires and Wants, and may pour out their Complaints into his Bosom. *Abraham* is sensible of the Greatness of this Privilege, by reflecting upon the Greatness of his Distance: It is an unspeakable Honour for Dust and Ashes to be received into such Familiarity with the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

3. *Utility.* It quiets and eases the Heart when it is troubled to vent itself to God, as there is some natural Ease in Sighs and Tears; (for otherwise Nature should not have been furnished with them, nor teach us to use them;) they discharge some Part of Grief, though address'd no whither, but only let out, more when it is in the Presence of some entire Friend; so that they must be most of all easing, when they are directed to God in Prayer *. *Mine Eye poureth forth*

* *Cor serenat & purgat oratio, capaxque efficit ad excipienda divina munera, S. Aug.*

Tears unto God, says *Job*; and *David*, *My Sighing is not hid from thee*. *Cast thy Burden on the Lord*, says the Psalmist. The Lord calls for our Burdens, would not have us wrestle with them ourselves, but roll them over on him. Now the Desires that are breathed forth in Prayer are, as it were, the very unloading of the Heart; each Request that goes forth, carries out somewhat of the Burden with it, and lays it on God. *Be careful in nothing*, says the Apostle: That were a pleasant Life indeed, if it might be; but how shall that be attain'd? Why, this is the only Way, says he, *In all Things make your Request known unto God*: Tell him what are your Desires, and leave them there with him, and so you are sure to be rid of all further disquieting Care of them; try as many Ways as you will, there is no other will free you in Difficulties of all perplexing Thoughts but this, and this will do it.

2. In it the Graces of the Spirit are exercised, and they gain by that, as all Habits do. They are strengthened and increased by acting Faith, in believing the Promises: And that is the very Basis of Prayer; it cannot subsist without the Support of Faith. And Hope is raised up and set on Tip-toe, ἀποκαρδοκεῖν, to look out for Accomplishment, and love it, is that which delights it, to impart its Mind to him on whom it is set, and thus to entertain Converse and Conference with him: And all Hours seem short to it that are thus spent; and by this it still rises to a higher Flame, it is blown and stirred by Prayer. The more the Soul converses with God, doubtless the more it loves him.

And this speaking your Desires to God in Prayer, makes the Heart still more holy, invites it to entertain new Desires, but such as it may confidently acquaint God withal.

In relation to the particular Things desired, it not only fits and disposes the Heart for receiving them as Blessings, but withal it is a real Means of Obtainment, by reason of God's own Appointment, and of

his Promise. He hath bound himself by his Promises, not to disregard the Prayers of his People: *His Ear is open to their Cry*, says the Psalmist; and the many Instances in Scripture, and Experience of the Church in all Ages, bear Witness to the Truth of these Promises. Imminent Judgments averted, great Armies conquered, and the very Course of Nature countermanded, the Sun arrested, by the Power of Prayer. *Moses's* Hands only held up to Heaven, routed the *Amalekites* more than all the Swords that were drawn against them*.

The Goodness of God is exprest in his Promises; and these Promises encourage Prayer, and Prayer is answered with Performance, and Thanksgiving returns the Performance in Praise to God, *Psal. l. 15.* So all ends where it began, in him who is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and End of all Things.

If you would be rich in all Grace, be much in Prayer. Conversing with God assimilates the Soul to him, beautifies it with the Beams of his Holiness, as *Moses's* Face shined when he returned from the Mount. It is Prayer that brings all our Supplies from Heaven, (as that Woman, *Prov. xxxi. 14.*) draws more Grace out of God's Hand, and subdues Sin and the Power of Darkness; it entertains and augments our Friendship with God, raiseth the Soul from Earth, and purifies it wonderfully. Their Experience, that have any of this kind, teacheth them, that as they abate in Prayer, all their Graces do sensibly weaken: Therefore when the Apostle hath suited a Christian with his whole Armour, he adds this to all, *Pray continually*; for this arms Man and his Armour both with the Strength and Protection of God, *armatura armaturæ oratio.*

After this Manner.

They that know any thing of their own Wants and Poverty, and of the Bounty and Fulness of God, cannot doubt of the continual Usefulness of Prayer;

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* In *Aurelius* his Time the Legion of the Christians is called *Legio Christiana.*

and they that are sensible of their own Unskilfulness, will acknowledge, that as Prayer is necessary, so there is Necessity of a Direction how to perform it. The Disciples found this in themselves, when they said, *Lord teach us to pray*, as St. Luke hath it, where he records this Prayer. And our Saviour here marks the Errors of Hypocrisy and babbling in Prayer that are so incident to Men, and teacheth his Disciples, *After this Manner therefore pray ye.*

As for prescribing Forms of Prayer in general, to be bound to their continual Use in private or publick, is no where practised. Nor is there, I conceive, on the other Side, any thing in the Word of God, or any solid Reason drawn from the Word, to condemn their Use.

There is indeed that Inconvenience observable in their much Use, and leaning on them, that they easily turn to Coldness and Formality; and yet, to speak the Truth of this, it is rather imputable to our Dullness, and want of Affection in spiritual Things, than to the Forms of Prayer that are used. For whereas some may account it much Spiritualness to despise what they have heard before, and to desire continual Variety in Prayer, it seems rather to be want of Spiritualness that makes that needful, for that we find not our Affections lively in that holy Exercise unless they be awaked and stirred by new Expressions. Whereas the Soul that is earnest on the Thing itself for itself, panting after the Grace of God, and the Pardon of Sin, regards not in what Terms it be uttered, whether new or old; yea, tho' it be in those Words it hath heard and uttered a hundred times, yet still it is new to a spiritual Mind. And sure the Desires that do move in that constant Way, have more Evidence of Sincerity and true Vigour in them than those that depend upon new Notions and Words to move them, and cannot stir without them. It may be it is no other but a false Flash of temporary Devotion that arises in a Man's Heart, which comes by the Power of some moving Strain of Prayer that is

ew. But when Confessions of Sin, and Requests of Pardon, though in never so low and accustomed Terms, carry his Heart along with them Heavens, it is then more sure that the Spirit of God dwelling in him, and the Sense of the Things themselves, the Esteem of the Blood of Christ, and the Favour of God, do move the Heart, when there is no Novelty of Words to help it. So then, though the Lord bestows rich Gifts upon some of his Servants, for his Glory, and the Good of his Church; yet we should beware, that in fancying continual Variety in Prayer, there be not more of the Flesh than of the Spirit, and the Head working more than the Heart. It is remarkable that (as they that search those Things observe) the Words of this Prayer are divers of them such, as come near the Words of such petitions as were usual among the *Jews*, though he, in whom was all Fulness and Wisdom, was not scarce of Matter and Words; so little was Novelty and Variety considerable in Prayer in his Esteem. Mistake not, the Spirit of Prayer hath not his Seat in the invention, but in the Affection. In this many deceive themselves, in that they think the Work of this spirit of Prayer to be mainly in furnishing new Supplies of Thoughts and Words; no, it is mainly in exciting the Heart anew at Times of Prayer, to break forth itself in ardent Desires to God, whatsoever the Words be, whether new or old, yea possibly without Words; and then most powerful when it words it fast, but vents in Sighs and Groans that cannot be expressed. Our Lord understands the Language of these perfectly, and likes it best; he knows and approves the Meaning of his own Spirit, looks not to the outward Appearance, the Shell of Words, as men do.

But to speak particularly of this Form that is above all Exception; it is given us as the Pattern and Model of all our Prayers, and the closer they keep to it, the nearer they resemble, they are the more approved. It is a Wonder then how any can scruple the

Use of this Prayer itself; For if other Prayers are to be squared by it, what forbids to use that which is the Square, and therefore perfectest? If they be good by Conformity to it, itself must be better. The mumbling it over without Understanding and Affection is indeed no other but a gross Abuse of it, and taking of the Name of God in vain, as all other lifeless Prayer is. And this is not only the Popish Abuse of it, but too much our own; for when we do not both understand, and attentively mind what we say, it is all one to us, though in our own Tongue, as if with them we said it in an unknown Language. It is a foolish superstitious Conceit, to imagine that the rattling over these Words is sufficient for Prayer; but it is, on the other Side, a weak groundless Scruple, to doubt that the Use of it, with spiritual Affection, is both lawful and commendable.

On *us*] It is a Particle both for the *Matter* and *Manner* of Prayer.

1. *The Matter.*

This may be our Rule, that whatsoever we cannot reduce to some Part of this Prayer, as contain'd under it, should be no Part of ours. If we take not heed to this, we may abuse the Throne of God with undue and unworthy Suits, and ask those Things that it were a Punishment to give us: Therefore *Plato* chuseth well that Word, *Give us what is good for us, whether we ask it or not; and what is evil give us not, though we should desire it.* Not to speak now particularly, we see in the Matter of this Prayer in general, that spiritual Things are to be the Main of all our Prayers, and in Things temporal, not to lodge superfluous inordinate Desire, but in a moderate Use to seek Things necessary.

2. For the *Manner*: Observe, 1. The Order of this Prayer, that the Soul put itself in the Sight of God, and him in its own Sight, beginning as he doth with due Thoughts of the Majesty of God, to whom we pray; and this is of very great Consequence. But more of this hereafter. 2. That the Glory of

God is wholly preferred to all our own Contentment of what kind soever, that is to be the First-born and Strength of all our Desires, and all that we seek for ourselves must be in Relation to that his Glory, directed to it as our highest Scope. And because we are naturally full of Self-love, and our Hearts are carried by it towards our own Interest, and therefore will be ready to start aside like deceitful Bows, and slip us in our aiming at that Mark, therefore there be three several Petitions, all of that Strain, to make them steady and fixed towards it, to desire in all things, and above all things, that our God may be glorified.

3. *Brevity*, opposed to that Babbling which our Saviour reproves and particularly corrects by this Form; that Fault he lays on the Heathen, not upon the Jews, for they blamed it too, and their Doctors spake against it, alledging that Place that is very pertinent, *Eccl. v. 2.* where he argues from our exceeding Distance and the Greatness of God, because Men use not to entertain great Persons with long empty Discourses. Know then before whom thou art in Prayer, and have so much Respect to the Majesty of God, as not to multiply idle Repetitions, such as wise Men cannot well endure, how much less the all-wise God. *Βαττολογία* and *πολυλογία* are here put as one, because the one is the consequent of the other; where there is much speaking, there will be vain speaking and empty Repetitions*. *In multitude of Words there wanteth not Sin*, says *Solomon*; and we see it, that they that lay a Necessity upon themselves of a long Continuance and many Words in Prayer, as if it were otherwise no Prayer at all, they fall into this Inconvenience of idle repeating; and this is almost unbecoming our Access to the Majesty of God, as if there were some Defect either in his Knowledge, or in his Attention, or Affection to those that seek him. Therefore, though this was the common Fault of the Heathen, yet some even of them had so much discerning

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* *Χωρὶς τὸ εἰπεῖν πόλλα καὶ τὰ κήρια.* Soph.

discerning as to condemn this Folly, and inveigh against it*, acknowledging both the Wisdom of God and his Love to Mankind, and that he understand far better what is fit for us, than we ourselves, and therefore was not to be dishonoured with idle Tediousness in Prayer.

But is then all Length and much Continuance in Prayer, and all redoubling of the same Request reprovable? surely no. Were there nothing else to persuade us of this, our Saviour's own Practice were sufficient, who prescrib'd this Rule, and yet is found to have spent whole Nights in Prayer, and to have iterated the same Request; and doubtless (which can be said of no other) his Example is as perfect a Rule as his Doctrine.

This then briefly is the Fault here, when the long Continuance and much Repetition in Prayer is affected as a thing of itself available, when heaping on Words, and beating often over the same Words though the Heart bear them not Company, is judged to be Prayer; and generally whensoever the Tongue outruns the Affection, then is Prayer turned into Babbling. Yea though a Man use this very short Form here prescribed, yet he may commit this very Fault against which it was provided, he may babble in saying it; and it is to be feared the greatest Part do so. Men judge (and that rightly) a Speech to be long or short, not so much by the Quantity of Words, as by the Sense; so that a very short Speech that is empty of Sense may be called long, and a long one that is full, and hath nothing impertinent is truly short*: Thus as Men judge by the Sense of Speech, God judgeth by the Affection of Prayer, that is the true Sense of it, so the Quality is the Rule of the Quantity with him. There is no Prayer too long to him, provided it be all enlivened with Affection

* *Paucis verbis rem divinam facito.* Pl.

† *Absit ut multiloquium deputem, quando necessaria dicuntur, quæ talibet sermonum multitudine ac prolixitate dicantur. Brevitas etiam in longissimâ oratione, cui nihil inest alieni.*

no idle Repetition where the Heart says every Word over again as often and more often than the Tongue. Therefore those Repetitions in the *Psalms*; *Lord hear, Lord incline thine Ear, Lord attend, &c.* were not idle on this Account; God's own Spirit did dictate them, there was not one of them empty, but came from the Heart of the holy Pen-men, full fraught with the Vehemency of their Affections. And it is reported of St. *Augustin*, that he prayed over for a whole Night, *Noverim te, domine, noverim me*: Because his Heart still followed the Suit, all of it was Prayer. So that in Truth, where the Matter is new, and the Words still diverse, and very rich in Sense, yet with God it may be idle multiplying of Words because the Heart stays behind; and where the same Words are repeated, that a Man seems poor and mean in the Gift of Prayer to others, yet if it be not Defect of Affection, but Abundance of it (as it may be) that moves often the same Request, it is not empty, but full of that Sense that the Searcher of Hearts alone can read. I had rather share with that *Publican* in his own Words, and say it often over, as if I had nothing else to say, *God be merciful to me a Sinner*, saying it with such a Heart, than the most excellent Prayer, where the outside is the better Half.

So then this is the Mistake of Men, to think to make Words pass for Prayer with God, and to make up what is wanting inwardly, with multitude of Words and long Continuance; a foolish Compensation, that will no way satisfy him that says, above all, *my Son, give me thy Heart*; and no Length nor Words can supply the Want of that with him. Yet many do thus, they give large Measure of that which is altogether worth nothing; as the Orator said of those that make a poor Speech pass for something, with crying it out with a loud Voice, *that they were like to those Cripples that got a Horseback to bide their halting.*

It is thus here, and the Church of *Rome* hath it for their common Shift, they have shut out the Heart out of this Employment, where it hath most Interest,

by praying in an unknown Tongue; and this Defect they make up with long Continuance, and Repetition of *Pater nosters*, with a Devotion as cold and dead as the Beads they drop. And so they with their Breviaries, notwithstanding of their Name, fall directly into this foolish heathenish Vanity of idle Length and Repetitions.

Thus do we too, though we speak our own known Language, when either in secret or in publick we suffer our Hearts to rove in Prayer, and hear not ourselves what we are praying, how then can we expect that God should hear us?

If the Affection can be brought to continue in it, Prayer in secret cannot be too long: But let us not think it Virtue enough that it is long, let it rather be brief with strong Bent of Mind, than long without it*; as a small Body strong and full of Spirits, is much better than the greatest Bulk that is dull and spiritless. And when we pray in Company, because Men cannot know the Temper of other Mens Hearts, usually a convenient Mids betwixt Extreams, *viz.* Briefness and Length, seems most suitable.

But alas! how few be there that keep constant Watch over their Affections in Prayer, and endeavour to keep the Heart bent to it throughout? Oh! how much Sin is committed by us this Way that we observe not?

This is a great Lesson, and requires still our Diligence, even all our Lifetime, to learn it better and better, how to pray.

We have here indeed a compleat Copy, but we cannot follow it; he that set it us must put his Spirit within us, to lead our Hand and Heart that we may follow it, as he here shews, how we should pray. We are not born with this Art, *simus oratores*, and I may add the other Word, true of us, in regard of our Vanity of Mind, and the Devices that arise in it,
nascimur

* *Non est (ut quidam putant) orare in multiloquio, si diutius oretur, aliud est sermo multus, aliud diuturnus affectus. Absit multa loquutio, sed non desit multa precatio. Aug.*

nasimur poetæ. Omnis fectio cordis, &c. Gen. vi. 5. Eccl. vii. ult. We must have that Spirit of his, the Spirit of Prayer, to teach us effectually, and make us learn this divine Art of Prayer, according to his Rules. Although we are thus externally taught by our Saviour's Doctrine, yet unless we be taught within by the Spirit, we are never the nearer, we know neither what to ask, nor how to ask; but that is a happy Supply, and they may rejoice in it that have it, the Spirit of God *helping their Infirmities, and making Intercession for them*: How should they but speed in their Suits with God, that have both his own Spirit interceding, by framing and inditing their Petitions, and his own Son interceding at his Right Hand by his Merits?

Our Father.]

He that follows me (says our Saviour) *shall not walk in Darknes.* 'Tis our safest in all our Ways to be led by him, particularly in our Access to the Father by Prayer; he leads us in by his Intercession, through him we have *ἰσχυρισμός*, Access, or rather *Adduction*, takes us by the Hand to bring us to the Throne of Grace, gives us his Spirit to frame our Minds, and teach us with what Disposition to pray. Here he leads us, by putting Words in our Mouths, and furnishing us what to say.

1. The Preface or Compellation,
2. The Petitions.
3. The Conclusion.

1. By the Preface we are in general taught this, (e're we consider particularly the Words of it;)

1. To endeavour to have right Thoughts and Apprehensions of God, on whom we call. 2. At our Entry or Beginning to pray, to set ourselves before him, and him before our own Sight, to have the Eye of our Mind set on that Deity we worship. This would do much to the curing that common Disease of our Prayers, the wandring and roving of our Minds; an Evil that they cannot but be sensible of, and often bewail, that take any Notice of their own inward

inward Carriage with God, that trace their own Hearts, and ask Account of their Behaviour in Prayer *. Oh! light inconstant Hearts! (may they say) as the *Latin* reads that, *Psal. xl. Cor meum dereliquit me.* How many regard them not at all? But they that do, find it their ordinary Trick to give them the Slip: And this is one great Cause of our Wanderings, that we do not, at our Entrance to Prayer, compose ourselves to due Thoughts of God, and to set ourselves in his Presence; this would do much to awe us, and balast our Minds, that they tumble not to and fro, as is their Custom. There be not many that do, but it would prove no doubt much Help, would we task ourselves to this, never to open our Mouths to God, till the Eye of our Soul were fix'd upon him, and taken up with considering of his Presence. But of this more when we come to these Words, *Who art in Heaven.*

[*Our Father which art in Heaven.*] *Our Father*; the Mercy of God is in this, to beget in us the Confidence of Faith: In the other, *which art in Heaven*; the Majesty of God to work us to Reverence: Tho' there is somewhat in the Word *Father* likewise to persuade Reverence, and something in the other that confirms Faith; but more of this hereafter; yet if we take that which appears most, and is predominant, the former mainly supports Faith, and the latter begets Humility.

The Frame of it is extensive; not *My Father*, but *Our Father*, and so throughout; besides that it was a Pattern both for publick and private Prayer, and so it was fittest to run in the larger and publick Stile. It doth no doubt (as all have taken it) teach the charitable Extension of our Prayers, where they are most private, to take in with our own the Good of others, and when we are busiest and most particularly dealing for ourselves, yet not to shut out our Brethren. Let the Place and Performance of secret Prayer be as private as may be, but the Strain and Suits

* *Nihil est in nobis corde fugacius.* Greg.

Suits publick, as well as personal. The privatest Prayer of the Godly is a publick Good, and he loses nothing by that; for, besides that his Particular is not hindred by taking in others, he hath this Gain, that by the same Reason he likewise hath a Share in all the Prayers of others. And this (though little considered by the most) is one Point, and not a small one, but a very profitable and comfortable Point of that Article of our Faith, *The Communion of Saints*, that every Believer hath a Share in all the Prayers of all the rest; he is Partner in every Ship of that kind that sets to Sea, and hath a Portion of all their gainful Voyages.

But he that in Prayer minds none but himself, doubtless he is not right in minding himself; howsoever this he may be sure of, that in keeping out others from his Prayers, he bars himself from the Benefit of all others Prayers likewise. *Si pro te solo oras, pro te solus oras.* S. Ambr. So that Self-love itself may here plead for Love to our Brethren. Forget not the Church of God, and to seek the Good of *Zion*; it is not only your Duty, but your Benefit. Are you not all concerned in it? If indeed you be Parts of that mystical Body: And it hinders not at all, but rather advances your personal Suits at God's Hands, when he sees your Love to your Brethren, and Desires for the Church's Good. Let not therefore any Estate, no private Perplexity or Distress, nor very Sorrow for Sin, take you so up, as to be all for yourselves; let others, but especially the publick Condition of the Church of God, find Room with you. We find it thus with *David*, when he was lamenting his own Case, *Psal. li.* and *Psal. xxv. ult.* and elsewhere; yet he forgets not the Church, *In thy good Pleasure do good to Zion, and build up the Walls of Jerusalem.* So then let this be the constant Tenor of your Prayers, even in secret: When thou prayest alone, *shut thy Door*, says our Saviour here; shut out as much as thou canst the Sight and Notice of others, but shut not out the Interest and Good of others, say
Our

Our Father, as the Heathen call their God, *Ζεῦ Πατήρ*, &c.

Father.] He is indeed our Father, * as the Author of our Being, beyond all the visible Creatures; he breathed upon Man the Breath of Life. But the Privilege of this our natural Relation, the Sin of our Nature hath made fruitless and comfortless to us, till we be restored by Grace, and made Partakers of a new Sonship: We are indeed the Workmanship of God, but being defaced by Sin, and considered in that Estate, our true Name is *Children of Wrath*.

But the Sonship that emboldens us to draw near unto God as our Father, is derived from his only begotten Son. He became the Son of Man, to make us anew the Sons of God. Being thus restored, we may indeed look back upon our Creation, and draw out of it to use in Prayer with God, that we are his Creatures, the Workmanship of his Hands, and he in that Sense *our Father*. But by reason of our Rebellion, this Argument is not strong enough alone, but must be supported with this other, as the main Ground of our Comfort, that wherein the Strength of our Confidence lies, that he *is our Father in his Son Christ*; that by Faith we are invested into a new Sonship, and by virtue of that may call him *Father*, and move him by that Name to help and answer us, *Job. i. 12. To as many as received him, he gave Power to become the Sons of God*. Our Adoption holds in Jesus Christ as the Head of this Fraternity; therefore he says, *I go to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God*. He says not, to our Father and our God, but severally, *mine and yours*; teaching us the Order of the new Covenant, that the Sonship of Jesus Christ is not only more eminent in Nature, but in Order, is the Spring and Cause of ours, as St. Cyril well observes †. So then he that here puts this Word in our Mouths, to call God *Father*, he it is by whom

* *Τὸ γὰρ καὶ γένετο ἡμῖν.* Act. xvii.

† *Cyril. Hieros. Catech.*

whom we have this Dignity and Comfort that we call him so.

But this Adoption is accompanied (that we think it not a naked external Name) with a real Change, and so great a Change, that it bears the Name of that which is the real Ground of Sonship, it is called *Regeneration*. And these are inseparable, there be no Sons of God by *Adoption*, but such as are withal his Sons by *Regeneration* and *new Birth*: There is a new Life breathed into them from God; he is not only the Father of Spirits, by their first Infusion into the Body, and enlivening it by them, but by this new Infusion of Grace into the Souls of Men (as it seems to signify there, *Heb. xii.* where he is speaking of spiritual Sons) and enlivening them by it, which were dead without it, as the Body is without them; and the Spirit of God renewing them, is the *Spirit of Adoption*, by which they cry, *Abba Father*. He gives them a supernatural Life by this Spirit sent into their Hearts, and the Spirit by that Regeneration which he works, ascertains them of that Adoption which is in Christ Jesus, and in the Persuasion of both they call upon God as their Father.

So then you that would have this Confidence in approaching to God to call him Father, lay hold on Jesus Christ as the Fountain of Sonship; offer not to come unto God, but through him, and rest not satisfied with yourselves, nor your Prayers, till you find some Evidence that you are in him. And know that there is no Evidence of your Portion in the Son, but by the Spirit; therefore called the *Spirit of the Son*, by which we call God Father, *Gal. iv.* See whether the Spirit of God dwells and rules in your Hearts; for *they that have not the Spirit of God are none of his*, says the Apostle; but in the same Chapter he assures you, that as *many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are undoubtedly the Sons of God*.

If you then call on the Name of God, and particularly by this Name, *your Father*, depart from Iniquity; be ashamed to pretend to be his Sons, and yet

yet be so unlike him, wallowing in Sin. It cannot be that the Sons of so holy a God, can be altogether unholy, and delight to be so; no, though they cannot be perfectly free from Impurity, yet they that are indeed his Children, do certainly hate Impurity, because he hates it.

Do you draw near unto God in his Son Christ? Do you give yourselves up to be led by his Spirit? then you may account, and call him *your Father*; and if you may use this Word, there is Abundance of Sweetness in it; it is a Spring of Comfort that cannot run dry, and it hath Influence into all the Petitions; as likewise the other Word, *which art in Heaven*; "thou that art so great and so good." Whose Name and whose Kingdom should we desire to be advanced so much as our own Father's our heavenly Father? and his Will to be obeyed on Earth, as it is in Heaven. Of whom should we seek our daily Bread, but of our Father; and especially so rich a Father, Possessor of Heaven and Earth; and Forgiveness of our gracious Father, and Conduct, and Protection. In the hardest Condition that can befall you, ye may come to your Father; all the World cannot bar your Access: And there is no Child may go to his Father with any Suit with more Confidence, than you may to your Father. And if there be Mercy and Power enough in God, thou cannot miss of Help; he hath the Bowels of a Father, *Psal. ciii.* 13. yea, says our Saviour, *Can you that are evil give your Children good things, how much more will your heavenly Father, &c.* The Love of Parents to their Children they have from him; he hath given it to Nature, so it is but a Drop to the Ocean of fatherly Love that is in himself *. Let not then Unworthiness scar his Children; Parents love their Children and do them Good, not because they see they are more

* *Ante petitionem magnum accepimus, ut possimus dicere, pater, quid enim jam non det filiis petentibus pater, qui jam hoc ipsum dedit ut essent filii?* S. Aug.

more worthy than others, for it may be far otherwise, but because they are their own.

Yea, though we have run astray from him, and forgot very far the Duty of Children, yet he cannot forget the Love of a Father; and our best is to return to him, it cannot be well with us so long as we go any whither else. The Prodigal found it so, and therefore though he was convinced of that, that he was unworthy to be called his Son, yet he resolves to return, *I will go to my Father.* Yea, though to thy Sense he should seem to reject thee, yet let not go this Hold, if thou hast but a Desire to believe in him and love him, though thou canst find no more, and even while thou doubtest whether he is thy Father or no, yet press him with the Name, call him Father, speak to him as thy Father; Jesus his Son, in whom he is well pleased, doth warrant thee. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,* says Job: So resolve thou, though thou sawest his Hand, as it were ready to throw thee into Hell, yet cry to him still, and use this very Name, *Father reject me not;* never any perish'd with such a Purpose.

Who art in Heaven.]

Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling. This Compellation taken together, and rightly understood, works that due Temper of Prayer, the Mixture of these two, *Joy and Fear, Confidence and Reverence.* There was some such thing spoke of *Augustus*, but it is most true of the Divine Majesty, that they that dare speak rashly to him, know not his Greatness; and they that dare not speak to him (provided it be with due Reverence and Respect) know not his Goodness.

That we all invoke one Father, teaches that new Law of Love one to another, which our Saviour, the Author of this Prayer, so often recommends, and makes the very Badge of his Disciples. It serves to comfort the meanest, and to abate the Loftiness of the greatest that pray thus, as *St. Augustine* well observes, that they all meet and agree in this; the greatest

greatest Kings, and their meanest Subjects, all must speak to God as their Father, not only all alike having their Being from him as the Father of the Spirits of all Flesh, but the same Adoption belonging unto all, high and low, that are Believers. All the Pomp and Command and Pleasures of Princes, cannot make them happy without this Grace of Adoption; and no outward Baseness prejudices any, but they may be happy by partaking of it. In this likewise is very clear our Lesson of Love to God, because our Father; for though (as they say) Love doth descend much more than it ascends, and is here most of all verified, yet it doth ascend from the Children to their Parents by way of Reflexion, especially from the Sons of God to him as a Father, who is Love itself. And as this Name draws the Soul to the Throne of Grace with assured Expectation of Mercy, so it commands withal (as we said) Honour and Reverence, especially being accompanied with this other Word that mainly enforces that (*ὁ ἐν τοῖς ὕψουσιν*) *in the Heavens*, answering the Hebrew Word which is plural, and signifying that the glorious God is above all the visible Heavens; and thus the profane Authors speak of God likewise, *ὑπέρτατα δώματα ναίων*.

We know, although we are guilty of much forgetting it, that the Lord is every where present, neither excluded nor included any where; that he fills all Places, not as contained in them, but containing them, and upholding them, and all Things in them. But he is in Heaven after a special Manner, in the brightest Manifestation of himself, and the purest Service performed to him there. They cannot contain him, as *Solomon* expresses it, *1 Kings viii. 27*; yet his Throne is there, there he dwells, as in his principal Palace, in greatest Majesty, as *David* teacheth us, *Psal. xi. 4*. and often elsewhere. But that he is not shut up there, and regardless of Things below, we learn in that same Place; for he adds, *His Eyes behold, and his Eye-lids try the Children of Men*.

This is added, 1. For *Distinction*; as the Apostle differencing him from the Fathers of our Flesh, calls him *the Father of Spirits*; so here, from earthly Fathers, *our heavenly Father*.

Observe. We cannot here know God according to what he is in himself, and therefore he is described to our Capacity, and to our Profit, so as we are able, and as it most concerns us to know him here, by his gracious Relation to us as our Father, and by the Excellency of his Dwelling, as a Sign of his Greatness, that he is in Heaven, both which are extrinsical to his Essence: But thus we may learn thus much to worship and love him as the best and greatest, infinitely exceeding all that we can conceive of him.

2. As it is for *Distinction*, so it is such a Word of Difference as is of excellent Use.

1. To make the Soul humble and reverend in approaching to God in Prayer, if we consider it; will we not be wary how we behave ourselves in the Presence of so great a King? It is very strange that our Souls should not be possess'd with the deepest Lowliness and Self-abasement in the Sight of God; Worms in the Dust, before the Majesty that dwells in Heaven. This Solomon expresses, *He is in Heaven, and thou on Earth, therefore let thy Words be few*. What is this we find in ourselves that makes us so drunk with Self-conceit, not only in Converse one with another, but with God? Surely we know him not, at least we consider not who he is, and where he dwells, and who we are, and where we dwell. Surely it would lay us low, if, when we come before God, we would consider him as the most glorious King sitting on his Throne, and compass'd with glorious Spirits, that offer him spotless Praises, and we ourselves coming before him, as base Frogs creeping out of our Pond, where we dwell amidst the Mire of sinful Pollutions.

Thus indeed his Highness should humble us in coming, but it should not affright us from coming before him; for though he is in Heaven, and we on Earth, yet he is our Father: Thus ought we to join

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these

these two, and behold them jointly, that we may have that right Posture of Mind by them that suits with Prayer, *humble Boldness*.

There may be undue Distrust, but there cannot be too much Humility of Spirit in Prayer; The more humble, the fitter to come to God: And he the more willing to come into the Soul, and dwell in it; for that is the other House that he hath chosen. They seem very ill suited together, if the highest Heavens be the Lord's one Dwelling, it would seem fit that the other should be the richest Palaces on Earth, or stately built Temples. No, the other is such a one as we most despise, but God prefers before other, even the most sumptuous Building, *Isa. lviii. 15. Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy Place, with him also (a strange also) that is of a broken and humble Spirit, &c.* The highest Heavens are the Habitation of his Glory, and the humble Heart hath the next Honour, to be the Habitation of his Grace.

2. As the Word humbles the Soul in God's Sight, so it elevates it to Heaven where God dwells, and fixes it there in Prayer; and this Elevation is not contrary to Humility: The Soul that is laid lowest in itself, is most sublime in Converse with God *. And thus ought our Hearts to ascend in Prayer, which alas, we usually suffer to lag and draw the Wing heavily on the Earth. *Unto thee, O Lord, says the Psalmist, Psal. xxv. do I lift up my Soul;* that is the right and natural Motion of Prayer. But there is another lifting up, that our Souls are better acquainted with, which is spoken of in the Psalm immediately foregoing, *That lifting up of the Soul unto Vanity;* and the more so lift up, the further off from God. O the Vainness of our Hearts! and how hard is it to establish them on him that dwells on high? Even while we are speaking to him, we suffer them to break loose and rove, and to entertain foolish Thoughts: We

* *Sublimiter humilis & humiliter s. blimis.* S. Cypr.

would not use a King or great Person so, nor any Man whom we respect, when we are speaking to him seriously, to intermix Impertinencies, and forget what we are a saying: But we dare offer gross Nonsense to the All-wise God; though the Words go on in good Sense, yet the Prayer is so to him, when the Heart intermixes vain Thoughts. *Polum terræ miscet*, confuses and spoils all. And this is the great Task (as we have said) to bring the Heart before God, to set it on his holy Mountain in Heaven, while we pray, (it should be so certainly) and leave servile earthly Thoughts at the Foot of the Mount.

3. It gives Confidence. 1. Of the Power of God, his rich Ability to grant all our Requests: He, that Lord of all, and as greatest Possessor, hath his Throne in the highest Heavens, and doth what pleaseth him in Heaven and in Earth; this, with the other, compleats our Comfort, *Good-will* and *Power*, *Our Father in Heaven*. And this we may apply to all our Wants for Assurance of Supply, and to all our Enemies, and the Church's Enemies, that our Prayer shall be heard for their Foil and Disappointment. *He sits in Heaven and laughs*, Psal. ii. *They rage, and tumult, and consult, &c.* A great Bustle and Noise they keep, and he sits and laughs at them; he scorns all their proud Attempts: For that with Ease he can scatter them in a Moment; one Word of his Mouth overturns them and all their Contrivances.

2. It is a Confirmation of our Portion in Heaven: If he, who is in Heaven, be our Father, then our Inheritance lies there, in that Land of Peace where it cannot be lost or impaired, and he will bring his Children to the Possession of it. To be the Sons of God is not a Stile without an Estate, and empty Title; no, he that makes us Sons, makes us Heirs likewise, *Sons we are in Christ*, and *Co-heirs with Christ*. He came down to Earth for this Purpose, to make a new Purchase of Heaven for us, and he is returned thither to prepare it for us. *I go to prepare a Place for you, that where I am, ye may be also.*

Hallowed be thy Name.]

The Sense of many Wants and Necessities drives a Christian daily to God in Prayer, yet certainly that which draws him most strongly to it, is of a higher Nature. The Sense of his Duty to God, and the Delight he hath to do that Homage and Honour to him; and therefore in Prayer the main Current of his Heart runs that Way, and so agrees with this Pattern given us by our Saviour: Wherein we see clearly that our prime Desires are to be bestowed on the Glory of God, and that not only placed first, as to be preferred before all other Suits, but to be regarded still in all the rest, and they all referred to it. And to make the Impression of this Desire the deeper on our Hearts, and to give the fuller Vent of it in Expression to them that have it, there are, you see, three of these six Petitions spent on it; this is the first of them, *Hallowed be thy Name.* This suits well with the Stile here given to God. *Our Father.* If *I be a Father, where is my Honour?* says the Lord by his Prophet: And here his Children are taught to join these two together, thou art our Father, and so glorious a Father dwelling in Heaven; therefore our Desire is, that thou mayest have Honour, that thy Name may be hallowed, and thy Kingdom come. We will enquire,

1. What is meant by his Name. 2. What is the hallowing or sanctifying it. 3. What the Petition itself is.

Briefly, his Name is himself, as he is made known to us, and conceivable by us, and differenc'd from all other Beings, as Men are by their Names one from another; for to this Purpose are all these several Names and Attributes given him that we find in Scripture, that we may so conceive of himself as here we are capable.

2. To sanctify his Name (we know) cannot be to infuse Holiness into it, or effectually to make it holy; for neither can we so make any thing holy, nor can the Name of God be so made holy, for it is most holy
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of itself, yea he is Holiness itself, and the Fountain of all Holiness; but according to the double Sense of the Word *Blessing*, as mutual betwixt God and Man, so is this of sanctifying, *Blessed be the God* (says the Apostle, *Eph. i. 3.*) *and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings.* His *benedicere*, is *benefacere*; he blesteth us really, as the Giver of all Blessings, and of Blessedness itself; and our blessing him is no other, but the acknowledging of this, that it is he that blesteth us, and praising him for it. Thus he sanctifies us, makes us holy, purifies us by his Spirit from our natural Unholiness and Filthiness, according to his Promise, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25.* and according to our Saviour's Prayer, *Job. xvii. 17.* and we sanctify the Lord and his Name, (as here, and *Isa. viii. 13.*) when we know and acknowledge that he is holy, and use his Name holily; and thus they only sanctify, who affectionately pray thus, that his Name may be sanctified, whose Hearts he hath first sanctified and made them holy.

More particularly and distinctly, the sanctifying of God's Name hath in it these things. 1. To have right Thoughts of the Holiness and Majesty of God. 2. That upon so conceiving of him, our Hearts be reverently affected towards him. 3. Not only to have that due Apprehension and Reverence of his Holiness in the Habit, and so let it lie dead within us, but often to stir up ourselves to the Remembrance and Consideration of it, to call in our Thoughts to act about it; so this will increase our Knowledge and Reverence, (as all Habits grow by acting) and will excite the Soul to praise him, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *Give Thanks at the Remembrance of his Holiness.* 4. The declaring and extolling of his Holiness, speaking upon all seasonable Occasions honourably of his Name. 5. The humble Sense and Acknowledgment of our own Unholiness in his Presence; and therefore all these lowly Confessions of Sins, and of their own Unworthiness that we find in the Prayers of the Pro-

phets, are so many Hallowings of the Name of God, giving the Glory of Holiness to him alone, and taking with the Shame of their own Pollutions, thus *Dan. ix. Isa. lxiv. &c.* As some of the *Americans* have a Custom, when they appear before their King, to put on their worst Apparel, that all the Magnificence may rest upon him alone, and appear the better. Thus though the Majesty of God, in itself being infinite, needs nothing else to commend it, yet to our Apprehension of it, it may be thus; and the Saints in Desire of his Glory may intend this, to set off the Lustre of his Purity and Excellency, in the humble Confessions of their own Vileness, *To thee, O Lord, belongeth Righteousness, but to us Confusion of Face.* 6. The hallowing of God's Name is an earnest Endeavour of Conformity with him in Holiness; first in Heart, that must be the principal Seat of it, and then Holiness in all our Words and Actions, and the whole Course of our Lives. This is that which the Lord perpetually presses upon his People, *Be ye holy, for I am holy*; and this is the most effectual sanctifying of his Name by way of declaring it holy, when his People walk in Holiness. Though you tell the World, that he is holy, they know him not, they can neither see him nor his Holiness; but when they see that there are Men taken out of the same Lump of polluted Nature with themselves, and yet so renewed and changed, that they hate the Defilements of the World, and do indeed live holily in the midst of a perverse Generation; this may convince them that there is a brighter Spring of Holiness where it is in Fulness, from whence these Drops are that they perceive in Men; for seeing it is not in Nature, there must be another Principle of it, and that can be no other but this holy God; thus is his Name hallowed, and he known to be holy by the Holiness of his People. So then the Petition takes in all, and in it we desire the sanctifying and magnifying of God's Name in every possible Way. 1. By ourselves, that we may mind his Glory, and by his Grace sanctify his Name

Name. 2. By others, that our Lord may be more known and honoured in the World; they would gladly have many Hearts and many Tongues brought in to confess the Lord, and his Holiness and Greatness. Thus the *Psalmist* stirs up the Angels to bless the Lord, *Psal.* ciii. not that they need exciting, but to shew his own Affection to God's Praises. 3. And because there is still some Alloy and Mixture of Unholiness, in all the hallowing of his Name here below, all our Services stained; therefore, as the Godly do in this Request, with all the exalting and sanctifying of God's Name among Men, that is attainable here, so I conceive, they do as it were applaud to those purer Services and Praises that are given him above; and sensible how far they fall short themselves, they are glad to think that there be such Multitudes of Angels, and glorified Spirits, hallowing and praising his Name better and more constantly; not ceasing Day nor Night, to cry, *holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.* And here they follow as they can, and give their Acclamation, though in a lower Key, yet as loud as they are able, *even so, Lord, hallowed be thy Name.* Now the Cause and Source of this their great Desire of exalting and hallowing the Name of God, is their Love to him, which the Sight that he hath given them of his Excellency hath kindled in their Hearts.

After that their chief Delight is to think of him, and speak of his Name; gladly would they have him highly esteemed by all, and this is their Grief, that they can find so few to bear them Company and help them in this, in hallowing and extolling his Name, which is so deep engraven on their Hearts. See how pathetically the *Psalmist* repeats that again and again, *Psal.* cvii. *O that Men would praise the Lord for his Goodness, and his wonderful Works to the Children of Men.* And when they hear or see any thing tending to the Dishonour of his Name, this wounds them, and pierces them through as a Sword, as the *Psalmist* speaks. They are far from Envy or

evil Eye, yea they rejoice in the Gifts and Graces that God bestows upon others, although it be beyond what they have themselves; for still it serves their Desires, and answers what they are most earnest in, it tends to the hallowing and glorifying of the Name of God. And what they have themselves, they are not in Danger to grow vain upon it; rather they wonder at the free Grace of God, and extol that, and think with themselves, "What am I, that he should
 " have had Compassion on me, and pluck me out
 " of the Crowd of the lost World, and given me
 " any Desire to hallow his Name, while others are
 " blaspheming it, and delighting to dishonour it?" But ever the more they receive from God, they are the more humble, the more desirous of his Praise, and regardless of their own. Any Holiness that is in them they know well is from him, and therefore all the Glory of Holiness must return thither, from whence Holiness originally comes; and the very End for which they desire Increase of Holiness in themselves, is to the end that they may the more hallow his Name, from whom they have it; and by the Increase of their Stock, there may be an Increase of the Tribute of Praise to God.

But, alas! how far are we from this Mind? What Hypocrisy is it, for the same Mouth to utter this Request, that dare prophane the Name of God by vain Swearing? That which is *holy*, as the *Hebrew* Word imports, is *separated* from common Use; (although it was not holy before) and ought not to be profaned; least of all this Name, that is not made holy by such a Separation, but is primitively holy in itself; and they that use it rashly and unholily, are deeply guilty of despising the Majesty of God. 'Tis not possible that any that is truly sensible of his Greatness and Holiness, can customarily abuse his Name, that blessed Name that he hopes to bless for ever. You say, it is your Custom; it is a Wonder to hear Men speak thus as an Excuse, it is the deepest Accusation. Are not Men known by their Customs? Do not
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those discover what they are? It is your Custom, what gain you by that? You must confess, it is such a one as is the Custom of the Children of Satan, the profest Enemy of God's Name, as the Delight and Custom of hallowing his Name is the Badge of his Children. 2. It is your Custom; then know, it is his Custom not to acquit them, but make them feel the Weight of his punishing Hand, that dare make it a Custom to dishonour his Name. Again, they that prophane his holy Day, they that sanctify not his Name by calling on it daily in private, and generally all that by an unsanctified Life do blot the Profession of Christians, what do they mean to lie so grossly, not unto Men but unto God, to his Face, in praying thus? as if they desired the hallowing of his Name by all, and yet do nothing but unhallow it themselves. Think it not sufficient to the hallowing of his Name, that his House and Worship is purged of Abuses, though they be holy, yet unless we ourselves be holy too, we pollute all in our Use of them, the Worship, and Sabbaths, and Name of God, our filthy Hands defile all. Let us not thus provoke God, lest in just Wrath and Punishments, he sanctify his own Name upon us, which we prophane, as he threatens against the *Jews* by his Prophets.

Be not satisfied to think slightly and superficially of God, take time to consider him, and know who he is; and then you will reverence him in your Thoughts. It deserves and requires all the whole Heart to be taken up with it; and alas! what is a Heart, a narrow thing, though the largest of Hearts, as *Solomon's*, *large as the Sand of the Sea*, to an infinite God! We can find time for our earthly Thoughts, and for vain foolish Thoughts, that are good for nothing, and shall we shut out God, or think any sudden passing Look enough for him. 2. Behave yourselves with regard of him in his Worship; *ἀγία ἀγίω*, let holy Things be done holily, 3. Honour it in your Lives, especially such as do know his Name, grow daily more respective and tender

der of it, and be more circumspect in your Actions, and as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all Manner of Conversation.

Thy Kingdom come.] He that is the Beginning of all things, must likewise of Necessity be the End of them all, and then are our Intentions rightest and purest, when we are most possess'd with the Desire of that highest End, the Glory of God, and look straightest unto it: and if this Purpose ought to diffuse through all our Actions, certainly in Prayer it should be most lively and active, because Prayer is so direct, and express a Turning of the Face of the Soul unto God, and setting of its Eye upon him. Therefore, this Petition follows forth the same Desire with the former, wishing Honour to God. He is a most holy God, and the former Request was for his Glory in *that*, in the *sanctifying* of his Name; he is a King, a great King, the greatest of all, and *this* wishes his Glory in that Sense, that his *Kingdom* may be advanced. *Thy Kingdom come.* 1. We shall enquire what his Kingdom is. 2. What is the coming of it. And 3. Shall speak of the Petition itself.

This Kingdom is not his universal Supremacy over all the World, and all the Creatures in it, as being their Maker and their Preserver, and so having the highest and justest Title, and the most absolute Kind of Dominion over all Things; but his peculiar Royalty over his Church. By the former he is called *King of Nations*, *Jer. x. 7.* and by the latter, his *Stile* is *King of Saints*, *Apoc. xv. 3.* Of the former the *Psalmist* speaks, *Psal. xxiv. 1.* but that which he adds *Ver. 3.* concerns the latter, and so on in the *Psal.* and *Ver. 7.* *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, that the King of Glory may come in.*

This Kingdom is gathered and selected out of the other, and though the less in Quantity, yet in God's Account the far more precious than all the rest; the Church is the Jewel in the Ring of the World; in it he hath his peculiar Residence and chief Delight; as Kings chuse one of their Palaces, and (if they have more)

more) one of their Kingdoms to dwell in more than another. Those things that are hid from the rest of the World concerning this King, are made known to his Subjects of this his select Kingdom, and it is in it that he opens up, displays after a special Manner more than in all the World besides, both the Glory of his Majesty, and the Riches of his Bounty, *here in Part*, and fully *hereafter*, and according to that Difference it is distinguished into the Kingdom of *Grace*, and that of *Glory*.

The Kingdom of *Grace* is to be considered, 1. In the external Means and Administration of it. 2. In its inward Being and Power: In the former Sense, it is of a larger Extent; but in the latter, of a more uniform Nature in itself, and more conform to its Head. The former, the Kingdom of Grace in its outward Administration, is plainly the whole visible Church; but the inward Power of the Kingdom of Grace, is only in the Hearts of those that are truly sanctified, and Members of the invisible Church.

Jesus Christ is ordained and anointed the King and Head of both, political; but of the one, natural, and therefore altogether indissoluble, not only in regard of the whole, but of each Part and Member of it.

The visible Church is but a little Parcel, a Kingdom chosen out of the World; but the truly Godly, that are alone the Subjects of the inward Kingdom of Grace, are but a small Part of that Part, a choice Part of the visible Church, as it is a choice Part of the visible World.

Now these three, The Kingdom of Glory, and those two Kinds of the Kingdom of Grace stand in this Subordination; the inward Kingdom of Grace, is the Way and Preparation for that of Glory, and the outward Kingdom of Grace in the visible Church, is the Means and Way of introducing, and establishing, and increasing the inward; so that both of them look forward to the Kingdom of Glory, as their utmost End, and shall terminate and end in it.

The first of these, the external or political Kingdom of Christ in the visible Church, consists in his
absolute

absolute and supreme Authority, to appoint the Laws of his Church, and Rulers by these Laws. And the Use of the Word, and Sacraments, and Discipline, according to his own Appointment, is the Acknowledgment of him as King of his Church.

The other, the inward Kingdom of Grace, is then received in the Heart, when the Spirit of God moves it to a willing Subjection to Jesus Christ, and the whole Soul submits itself to be governed by him; he enters indeed by Conquest, and yet is most gladly received; it is both a lawful and a favourable Conquest, because he frees the Soul, which is his by so many Rights, from the Tyranny of a most cruel Usurper, the Prince of Darknes, and brings in a Kingdom full of Sweetness and Happiness; there is no worse in it than these, *Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*

This is the Folly of an unbelieving Mind, that it entertains most false Prejudices against the Kingdom of Christ, thinks that if it let him in, it shall be controll'd and curb'd, and therefore resolves against it, and studies how to hold him out, *consults* (as it is in the 2d Psalm) *against the Lord and his Anointed.* But this is a lamentable Madnes to dream of Liberty in the midst of Chains, and to be afraid of a Deliverer; there is no Soul that opens to this King of Glory, but can testify that it never knew what true Liberty was, till it admitted this Kingdom of God, till there was a Throne for Christ erected within it.

The third, the Kingdom of *Glory*, would you hear wherein that consists? It is such as we cannot hear, nor speak of as it is. And this indeed says more of it than all we can say, That the Excellency of it is unspeakable, yea unconceivable: This we are sure of, to speak comparatively of it, (which is our Help in Things we understand not in themselves) that all the Kingdoms of the World unite all their Glory together, are base and poor in respect of it, but *splendida in serico*, and that all the Delights we have here, not only of Nature, but even of Grace,

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are less to it than the smallest Sparkle is to the Sun in its Brightness. All that is done here by our King Christ, in the ruling of his Church, and Power of his Ordinances, and bestowing of Graces on his own, are but Preludes and Preparations for that, and when that cometh, this way of ruling his Church and People shall cease, as having attain'd its End. Christ shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father; Word and Sacraments and Discipline shall be at an End, and then God shall be *all in all*.

2. The Coming of the Kingdom of God in the former two, is the extending and spreading of them to these Places, and Persons that have not yet received them, the Increase of their Power where they are entertain'd; for they come gradually, and that Kingdom of Glory as it is concerned in the other, comes forward in them so far, and hastens towards its Perfection; but in itself as their Consummation, it shall come at once altogether in the End of Time.

3. So then in the Petition all these are included, and in their largest Extent; for it is to take it too narrow and too low, to restrain it only to our own Interest in this Kingdom, either of Grace or Glory, or both. Thus *David* excites *all to praise the Lord*, *Psal. ciii.* but most his own Soul begins with that, and ends with it. Although all they that desire it aright, do desire that they may partake of it, (for if they desire that God may be glorified, they cannot, but even out of Love to that Glory, besides their own Happiness, desire that they themselves may be among these that may honour God as the Subjects of his Kingdom) yet they stay not there, but dilate their Hearts to wish the Advancement and Accomplishment of his Kingdom in all the Elect, and in all those Ways that tend to it; and their Love may rise to that high Strain, as without considering their own Interest at all, yea, supposing that they were to be shut out of his Kingdom themselves, yet still to wish, *Thy Kingdom come*. "Let others enjoy and bless thee, Lord, for ever, even though I should be excluded: Let

“ thine Elect be gathered, though I were none of
 “ them: Be thou great, O Lord, whatsoever become
 “ of me.”

1. Considering what a Height of Glory will arise to God out of the final subduing of his Enemies, and full Deliverance of his Church, and the bringing home all his Children after all their Sufferings and Sorrows, to sit down together to that great Marriage-Supper of the Lamb; they cannot but thus breathe forth their Longings and Wishes, that that Time may be hastened, and the Fulness of their Lord's Kingdom accomplished, where it shall abide for all Eternity.

2. Both in relation to that End, and likewise in respect of the very present Glory, that redounds to God in it, they earnestly desire the Advancement and Enlargement of Christ's Kingdom here on Earth. For besides that thus it is rising to its Perfection, it is no small present Glory to our King Christ, as a Testimony of his invincible Power, that he rules in the very midst of his Enemies, and in despite of them all, *Psal.* cx. Not only sits sure and keeps his own, thrust at him who will, but when he pleases gains upon them, and enlarges his Territories, and grows greater by their Resistances and Oppositions. He is here, as *David*, often assaulted, and put to defend his Kingdom often in War, but always a Conqueror; but after this militant Kingdom he shall be as *Solomon*, who likewise typified him, reigning in perfect Peace.

Now because the Enemies of his Kingdom are not yet, as they shall be, all under his Feet, but round about him, and incessantly plotting and working against him, and Satan hath his Kingdom and his Throne in the World opposite to Christ; therefore this is one chief Point of this Request, that all adverse Power may be brought low, that all his Enemies may lick the Dust, and melt before him as Wax before the Fire: And for us, especially in these Times, that that Kingdom of Antichrist, the Son of Perdition,

may,

may, answerable to that his Name, be brought to Perdition, that God would remember his Promise, (for the Faithful are called his Remembrancers, though he forgets not, and hath his set Time for Judgment, yet he loves to be stir'd up by the Cries of his Children) that he would make good at length those Words he hath spoken of *Babel's* Ruin, and the flourishing Estate of his Church in these latter Times.

That the Power of the Word, and Purity of Religion, maugre all the Policy and Power of Men opposing it, may spread and extend itself, and make irresistible Progress, as the Sun in his Course: That Jesus Christ may be daily taking further Possession of the Nations, even to the Ends of the Earth, according to the Patent of his Father's Donation. And the Certainty of its Endurance and Growth till it be compleat, should not abate, but increase the Vigour of our Prayers for it; and the nearer Things are their Accomplishment, the more usually the Lord excites the Hopes and Prayers of his People about them, and they pray the more earnestly, *Dan. ix.* moving naturally in it, and therefore fastest when nearest their place.

Again, we pray in this, that where Christ doth reign in his outward Ordinances, there he would bring in his spiritual Kingdom into the Souls of Men, that *Sinners may be converted unto him*: The Love of the Glory of Jesus Christ will desire this earnestly, that many Hearts may be brought in to submit to him; for the Glory of a King is in the Multitude of his Subjects. Further, that they who are his People may grow more conform to his Laws; that his Dominion may be more powerful in their Hearts and Lives; and particularly, that we ourselves may find it so. You that will not receive the Kingdom of God within yourselves, to what Purpose do you speak this, as if you desir'd it to be enlarged, and flourish abroad? You can have no Comfort in it, remaining Slaves to Sin, and so Enemies indeed to it: neither
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the Kingdom of Christ in the Government of the Church on the one Side, nor on the other, the Coming of his Kingdom of Glory, can do you any Benefit, while the third is wanting, the inward Kingdom of his Grace, which is the true End of the former, and Means to partake of the Happiness of the latter. Why wish you the Day of the Lord? as the Prophet says of that Day he there speaks of: Mistake it not, though that Day of his Kingdom shall be all Glory in itself, it shall be to you, remaining still impenitent, Darkness and not Light, full of Horror and Amazement. 2. As you can have no Comfort in his Kingdom, so you cannot really wish its Advancement; you wish it well elsewhere, as if you were content it should be any where, rather than within yourselves. But would you indeed have his Kingdom to be embraced and advanced, then do for one, let him be thy King; first give him thine own Heart, and then wish him many more, for then thou wilt wish it heartily and truly. You that have received this Kingdom, yet have need still, even in that Sense, to wish the Coming of it even in further Degrees and fuller Efficacy. Find you not many Rebels yet unsubdued? No doubt they that search and know their own Hearts, will, and often do complain of them to their King. "O such Swarms of Lufts and unruly irregular Desires! when shall they all be brought into Subjection?" And so they lift up their Wish, from this to the other, the full and glorious Kingdom, and say again and again *Thy Kingdom come*. This is the noble Desire that takes up the Hearts of the Godly, while others are desiring and pursuing low base Things; their Minds and their Endeavour to their Power, are chiefly set upon this, the Advancement of the Kingdom of God. They seek not themselves, and their own Things with the World, to the Prejudice of this Kingdom; nor they desire to lose any thing, to suffer Contempts and Abasements themselves, so this Kingdom may flourish. *St. Paul* cares not what he be accounted, *modò magnificetur*

fiatur Christus, Phil. i. as the faithful Ministers of State, (and wise Princes chuse such) that are not making up themselves to their Master's Disadvantage, but always preferring his Honour to their private Benefit, feeling his Losses and Gains more than their own; as was said of St. *Augustin, Dominicis semper lucris gaudens, & damnis mœrens.* This is the right Temper of the Servants and Ministers of Jesus Christ, to be all for their Master, willing that their Name, and Estates, and Lives, and all may make a Part of his Footstool to step up to his Throne; not forc'd as his Enemies to be so, but willingly laying themselves low for his Glory. And this Comfort they have, that when his Kingdom shall come in its Fulness, and all his Enemies shall be trodden down for ever, then they shall be glorified with him, and shall see his Glory with exceeding Joy. Therefore do they so often desire his Coming, and are so weary of all they see here: And when he says himself, for their Assurance and Comfort, *Surely I come quickly,* their earnest Desire makes them eccho, *Even so, come Lord Jesus.*

There is some Loss to the Flesh, if we will hear it in this Desire in each Kind; the erecting of Christ's Kingdom in Purity in his Church, thrusts out the outward Pomp and Magnificence that naturally we like so well: His Kingdom of Grace cannot be in the Soul, without the forsaking of all our accustomed and pleasing Ways of Sin; but they that know the Excellency of his Kingdom, are well content to forego all that suits not with it. Thus that his Kingdom of Glory may come, the World must be burnt up, &c. and that we particularly may come to it, we must pass through Death; but it is worth all.

Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.]

I will direct my Prayer to thee, says David, Psal. v. The Word is, I will set it in Order, or orderly address it, which is not the curious contriving either of the Words, or Method, (for there may be most of that, where there is least of this right directing

it to God) but the due ordering of the Frame and Desires of the Heart; and certainly one main Point that is taught us, as we have said, in the Order of this Prayer, in this Particular, that it not only prefers the Honour of God to all our own Interest, setting the Heart first upon that; but keeps it to it, causes it to dwell upon that in three several Petitions, varying the Expression of that one Desire, as often as there be several Requests following of our own Concernment, teaching us that that doth, in its own Worth, and therefore should likewise in our Affection, itself alone being but one, weigh down all the different Things besides that we can desire: And thus withal it is accommodate to our Dulness, for that our Hearts would not readily with one Word be either duly stirred up or stretched forth in the heavenly Desire; so that both to excite and dilate them the more, it is thus iterated without vain Tautology. This so short and compleat a Form, given us by so wise a Master, is far from that, yea it was particularly intended in opposition to that Abuse. And not only doth the Dignity of the Thing itself, and our Indisposedness require this adding of one Request to another concerning it, but there is in the Petitions themselves a very profitable Difference, tho' their Scope is one; they are as so many several Arrows aim'd at the same Mark.

The first, in general, wishes all manner of Honour to the Name of God: And because his Name is especially honoured in the Advancement, and in End compleating of his spiritual Kingdom, the second is particular in that; and because, until that Kingdom be compleated and brought altogether, it lies in two several Countries: There is one Part of it already above, which is the appointed Place for the Perfection and Perpetuity of this Kingdom; another Part here below, but tending thither. And this third Petition particularly concerns these of this lower Region and Condition; desiring this, that in Obedience to their King, they may be as conform as is possible

to those above, *Tby Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Tby Will.] God is most perfectly one, and his Will one, yea, his Will is himself, he is *purus actus*; yet in respect of its several Objects or Circumstances that concern them, it is diversly distinguished in Schools, sometimes needlessly, yea, erroneously, but some of them are sound and useful. But here we shall not need them much. His Will is taken according to a very usual Figure, for that which he wills, and we desire here, * that we our ourselves and others may be obedient to his Will in every thing, even here on Earth, that he may be acknowledged and served, not only in Heaven, but here likewise.

For this (no question) means not the Equality of our Obedience to theirs, but the Quality of it, that tho' it fall very short of so perfect a Pattern, † yet it may bear some Resemblance to it, as a Scholar's Writing, though it be nothing so good as his Copy, yet may have so much Likeness, as to shew he follows it. It doth no wrong, but helps a Man much in any thing, the more perfect Example he hath before him, although he be not able to match it, yet the looking on it makes him do the better: Though an Archer shoot not so high as he aims, yet the higher he takes his Aim, the higher he shoots. And that we may not think it strange that we have here the Citizens of Heaven set before us as a Model for Obedience, we have our heavenly Father himself propounded by our Saviour in the former Chapter, as our Example for Perfection, *Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

The Obedience in Heaven is, 1. Universal, without chusing and excepting; and this is, because the Will and Command of God, is the very Reason of it, *Psal. ciii. 20.* the Angels are said *to do his Commandments, and to hearken to the Voice of his Word*; they wait but for a Word from him, and that is enough. And in this should we desire to be like

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them.

* Τὸ θελητὸν.

† Οὐχ ὅσον ἀλλ' ὡς.

them. Though we cannot fully keep any one Commandment, yet should we exclude none of them from our Endeavour; yea the rather, because we want that Perfection in the Degree, should we study this other, which is a Kind of Perfection in the Design and Purpose, *to have Respect to all the Commandments*, as David says; to have our Eye upon them all, as the Word there is: So *Psal. xvi. 8. I have set the Lord always before me, [æqualiter posui]* in an even constant Regard of his Will. And the Want of this discovers, that much of our Obedience hath not the right Stamp on it, no way heavenly.

A Man may think he approves and does the Will of God in some Things, where it is but by Accident, because the Letter of the Commandment is coincident with his own Will; and so it is not the Will of God, but his own that moves him: Therefore in doing that which God commands, he does not God's Will, but his own; and therefore when they meet not, but are contrary, there it appears, for he leaves God's Will then, and follows his own. A covetous Father condemns the Prodigality of his lavish Son, and the Son again cries out against the Avarice of his niggardly Father. And thus both seem to condemn Sin: But the Truth is, neither do it; it is but two extream Sins fighting together, neither of them regarding the Rule that God hath set; it is but their two Idols choaking each other, as the Heathen set their Gods together by the Ears. But they that therefore hate Sin, because of God's Countermand, and love his Will for itself, their Obedience is more even, and regards the whole Will of God, and at all Times; for there is that Universality too in their Obedience, conform to that of Heaven: *So shall I keep thy Law* (says David) *continually, for ever and ever.*

See a Man's Carriage when tempted or provoked to some Sin; for when the Occasion is out of Reach, and out of Sight, what wonder then he forbears? But when it offers itself, as by Company, Intemperance, or cursing or swearing by Passion, it appears,

if a Man yield then, that Sin was not out before, but only lay close and quiet within till it was stirred, as Mud in the Bottom of Water, *natura vexata pròdit seipsam*. So a Man may for his own Gain, or his own Glory, do God's Will. *Jehu* could say to *Jonadab*, *Come and see my Zeal for the Lord*.

2. It is chearful. It is the very natural Motion * of glorified Spirits to be acted and moved by the Will of God. *They excel in Strength*, says the *Psalmist*, in that *Psal. ciii. and do his Commandments*. They have no other Use for all their Strength, that is the proper Employment of it. Thus the godly Man, in so far as he is renewed (for in so far he suits with Heaven) delights himself in the Way of God's Commandments, takes more Pleasure in keeping them, than profane Men do in all their Pleasures of Sin, by which they break them. He is never well but when he is in the Way of Obedience, and the Ways of Sin are painful and grievous to him; then hath he most inward Gladness and Contentment, when he keepeth closest to his Rule. And the Reason why he finds the Law of God thus pleasant is, because it is not to him as to the ungodly one without, driving him violently, but it is within him, and therefore moves him sweetly, *I delight to do thy Will, O my God*, *Psal. xl. 8.* and he adds, *Thy Law is wilkin my Heart*, or in the Midst of my Bowels; so *Psal. lxxxiv. In whose Heart are thy Ways*; not only their Feet in the Ways, but the Ways are in their Hearts.

3. They do the Will of God in Heaven unanimously and harmoniously; there is neither an evil Eye of Envy among them, nor a lofty Eye of Pride, whatsoever Degrees there be among them in their Stations and Employments. Not to be curious in that, nor obtrude ourselves into Things we have not seen, yet sure the lesser do not envy the greater, nor the greater despise the less; and the Reason is, because they are all so wholly taken up, and so strongly united in this joint Desire of doing the Will of God. Thus ought his Servants here, each one in his Place,

and according to that which God hath dispensed to him, the greatest humbly, and the meanest contentedly, mind this, and nothing but this, to do his Will.

Answerably to the Sense of this Petition do godly Men in Prayer, 1. Vent their Regret and Grief unto God, that there is so little Regard and Obedience to his Will amongst Men, that they see the greatest part *taking Pleasure in Unrighteousness*, as the Apostle speaks. Thus *David, Rivers of Water run down mine Eyes, because Men keep not thy Law.* And as they bewail Ungodliness without them, so especially the Strength of Corruption within themselves: They begin there, and express their Grief in the Presence of God, that they are so clogged and hampered with Sin, cleaving fast to them, and crossing their Purposes of Obedience; saying with the Apostle, *I find a Law in my Members warring against the Law of my Mind.* 2. They declare their Desire of Redress, both in themselves and others; that their great Desire is, that more Obedience were given unto God, and particularly that they had more Faculty and Strength to serve him, *Psal. cxix. 4. 5.* 3. They pray in this, for the effecting of this their Desire, that God would incline Mens Hearts, and particularly their own, to the Obedience of his Will, (whatsoever vain Will-Worshippers say, they are indeed in that Sense ἐθελοθρησκοί, make a Deity of the Will) not doubting that it is in his Hand to do so, and that he hath more Power of our Hearts than we ourselves have; otherwise it were in vain to put these Supplications into his Hand, if he have no Power to answer them, to give them the real Answer of Performance. *Incline my Heart unto thy Law, &c. Turn us, O Lord, &c.* 4. They do in this Request offer up their own Hearts to God, to be fashioned and moulded to his Will: And every godly Man, if he had the Hearts of all the Men in the World in his Dispose, he would dispose them the same Way, lodge them with his own, and make

one Sacrifice of all; his own he gives wholly, resigns it up to his Lord, to be as a Piece of Wax in God's Hand, pliable to, what Form he will, to do with it what he will, to turn out and banish whatsoever displeases him, and to make it to his own Mind. In a Word. this is the Desire of a Christian, that his own Will may be annihilated, and the Will of God placed in its Room, that he may have no Will but God's, that he may be altogether subject to God's commanding, and his working Will, to do what he commands, and to be heartily content with what he does; for both these are in it*.

Where he commands any thing, though our own corrupt Will grumble at it, and think it hard, we must tread upon it to obey his Will, making that the Rule of all we do. To this End we must endeavour to be acquainted with his Will, and know what it is, otherwise we cannot do it; but once knowing it, this is the End of knowing, to do, otherwise (you know) that Knowledge will make us the worse for it, the more guilty.

'Tis a safe and comfortable thing to walk every Step by his Direction; the constant Regard of that, is that (we see) which conforms us to Heaven. It was observable how this Will prevailed with *Abraham*; he was a loving Father, it appears, and upon *Sarah's* private Motion, while there was no more, he could not find in his Heart to put *Ishmael* out of Doors, that was but *the Son of the bond Woman*; but upon God's Command he was ready to put *Isaac* to Death, that was *the Son of the Promise*. And he that taught us to pray thus, gives us his own Example in this, and he did the Will of his Father indeed, as it is done in Heaven, and he came to the Earth for that Purpose; then said he, *Lo I come to do thy Will, O my God*; and in that great and most painful Part of his Work, *not my Will but thine be done*. For our Actions then, let his Word be our Guide; and for

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* 'Tis Love that makes this Union of Wills, *Idem velle & idem nolle*.

the Events of Things, and all that concerns us, let his good Pleasure and wise disposing be our Will; let us give up the Rudder of our Life into his Hand, to be steer'd by him.

For our Actions, is it not better to observe his Will, than to be subject to our own corrupt Wills? and to Satan's, *led captive at his Will*? And as it is our best to do what pleaseth him, so in all his Dealing with us to be pleased with what he does; not to think it were better for us to be richer or greater in the World than we are, or to murmur and struggle under Affliction. There is nothing to be gained by this; *Who hath resisted his Will* at any Time? In all Things he doth what he will, whether it like us or not; our repining hinders not his working at all, but it hinders our own Comfort; our wrestling and fretting doth but pain ourselves. If we be his (as we profess) then we may be assured he loves us; and if we believe that, and withal believe that he is wiser than we, then we must confess, that whatsoever he doth with us is better than our own chusing for ourselves could be.

This is the only way of constant Quietness and Contentment of Mind. Who is there outwardly so prosperous, but meets with many Things that cross his Will? Now he that hath renounced his own Will, and is fixed upon a continual Complacency with the good Pleasure and Providence of God, to will what he wills, and nothing else; every thing that befalls him, he looks upon that Side of it as God's Will, and so is satisfied. "Doth God think this good, and shall I think it evil?"

There is Difference of Estates, but all coming from the same Hand, which is *Job's* Consideration; to embrace and kiss the worst that can come, is our Duty: *It is the Lord* (said David) *let him do with me what seems good in his Eyes*, 2 Sam. x. 12. Thus, "Wilt thou have me poor or rich, healthful or sick, esteem'd or despis'd? Wilt thou that I live, or that I dy? I am thine, thy Will be done."

Give

Give us this Day our daily Bread.] Man is made up of two different Principles, a Soul derived from Heaven, and a Body at first moulded out of Earth, as *Nazianzen* expresses it, πῦρ καὶ χῆς the *Breath* of God, and the *Dust* of the Earth *: And according to his Composition, so is this Prayer composed; being made for his Use, it is wisely fitted to his Condition.

The greatest Part of it is taken up with such Desires as are spiritual, and so most suitable to his worthier Part, his Soul, such as do immediately concern God, and such as properly concern itself. Yet the Body is not wholly shut out, though the meaner Part; yet being a Part of Man, and the Workmanship of God, this one Petition is bestowed upon its Concernment.

Observe in it briefly, 1. The Matter or Object of the Request. 2. The Qualification of it. The Matter under the Name of *Bread*, not only Bread for all Food, as the *Hebrews* do; but Food, so named, for all other Necessaries. By Bread, as the chief Support and Staff of Man's Life, is meant all needful temporal Blessings, Food, and Raiment, and Health, and Peace, &c. a Blessing on the Works of our Calling, and the Seasons of the Year, and all our lawful temporal Affairs.

Though a godly Man looks upon the Necessities of this Life as a Piece of his present Captivity, and is often looking beyond it to that purer Life he hopes for; yet in the mean while he doth, in Obedience to God, use these Things, and in Dependence upon God, he seeks them at God's own Hand.

In the Request, together with its Object, as here we have it, there is, 1. Piety. 2. Moderation. *Godliness* and *Soberness*.

1. *Piety*, asking our Bread of God; asking it in the true Notion by way of Gift. There is a natural Cry or Voice of our Necessity, and that not only ungodly Men, but unreasonable Creatures have, the very Beasts and Fowls, as the *Psalms* hath it, *The Ravens*

* *Ex igneo spiritu, & terreno corpore.*

Ravens ask their Meat from God: but this spiritual Cry of Prayer, is the peculiar Voice of God's own Children.

Now to ask Bread, or needful temporal things at the Hands of God, is not only no way incongruous to the Piety and Spiritual-mindedness of a Christian, nor no Wrong to the Majesty of God; but on the contrary, it were Impiety in Man, and an Injury to God not to do so. We have here the Warrant of his own Command, *pray thus*, and is it not most reasonable?

1. Seeing these things are necessary for us to receive, and in the Hand of God to bestow, why ought we not to seek them there?

Although in his Wisdom he knows what we need, and is in Bounty most ready to furnish us, yet this is the Homage we owe to God, to present ourselves and our Necessities before him, and seek our Supplies by Prayer. In it there is a clear Acknowledgment of the divine Providence and Goodness, and of our Faith and Reliance on it; and Faith is not only signified in Prayer in these things, but is acted and excited, and by that Means is increased and strengthened. 2. Godliness hath both kinds of Promises, those of the Life to come, and those of this Life; and as Godliness hath Right to them both, so it teacheth to use them both, and particularly this Way, by turning the Promises into Prayers, as a Means appointed by God, both to fit us for Obtainment, and to obtain the Performance of them. 3. Though a Man hath his Provision by him, not only of a Day, but of many Years, yet hath he need still daily to ask it of God, for it is still in God's Hand to give it him, or not to give, though it is in a Man's own Hand in present Possession. 1. It is in God's Dispose to continue it to him, or suddenly to pluck it from him out of his Hand, or even out of his Mouth, *ut bolus ereptus è faucibus*. How many have been thus on a sudden turned out of great Estates into extreme Poverty, either by the Hands of Men, which are moved by

God, or by some immediate Accident from his own Hand; and others by little and little, their Estates consuming and melting as Snow-balls. In the former the Judgment of God is as a *Lyon*, and in the latter as a *Moth*, as the Prophet speaks. Again, 2. If God do continue a Man in his Possessions, yet there is further needful for his chearful Use of daily Bread that Calmness and Content of Mind, and Healthfulness of Body, that are God's peculiar Gifts, without which all is unflavoury. Is the Mind in Bitterness or Distemper, or the Body tied to its Sick-bed? this disrelishes a Man's daily Bread, though it be of the richest Kind. 3. Having Bread and a Disposition to use it, yet there is further an Influence of blessing from God needful to make it serve its proper End; and without this, that Staff of Life is but as a broken Staff in a Man's Hand that cannot support him. 4. Besides that ordinary Blessing, there is yet something further that a godly Man desires, and desires it most of all, a secret Character and Stamp of the peculiar Favour of God even upon his Bread, his temporal Enjoyments. And this is a proper Fruit of Prayer, as there is (as is already said) a peculiar Voice of God's own Children in this Request, so God knows it particularly, and distinguishes it from the common Voice of natural Men, and other Creatures that call for Supply; and therefore he gives that peculiar Voice of their Suit a peculiar Answer, together with the daily Bread which he gives to others, and a common Blessing on it, they have something that is not given to others. This is that which particularly sweetens their Bread, that they receive it after a special Manner out of their Father's own Hand, having humbly asked it by a Prayer as his Gift.

That is the other thing observable in the Word of the Request, *Give*.

We are not by this forbidden, no, nor dispensed with from Labour and honest Industry for it, but after all our Labour we are still to acknowledge all as a free Gift, both the Bread we obtain by Labour and
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the Strength by which we labour. Just as we find it of the other Bread, the Bread of Life, *John vi. 27. Labour for it, which the Son of Man will give; laboured for, and yet given.* The Fruit of our Labours may be a just Reward from Men, but it is always free from God, even these lowest Benefits to the best and holiest of Men: *I am less (says Jacob) than the least of thy Mercies.* We have no Motive for the least Mercy but his own Goodness, as our Father; so that it suits with this, as with all the other Requests here, though we deserve nothing, yet he is our Father: It is proper for Children to ask Bread of their Father, as our Saviour teaches us in the next Chapter, therefore he teaches us here to say, *Father, give us Bread.*

2. The Moderation of the Desire appears, in comparison of the Number of the other Petitions, all the rest for things spiritual, and but one for temporals; those that regard the Glory of God as the chief, are three to one with it, and those that concern our own spiritual Good two for one.

Thus for the Number; and the Order or Place, which so many have taken quite contrary, it suits very well with this, as the least of our Requests, and so to be accounted by us. It is strange that this right Place of it should have scared Men from its right Meaning, and persuaded them to take it for our spiritual Food, or the Bread of Life, because it is the first of the three. But taking it as it is, for this Life's Necessaries, there is no need of such Reasons as some give for its standing in this Order, that are a little light and unsolid. But to omit even these that are more pertinent, which justify this Order, though this Petition be less than the two following, it seems truly the only fit Place for it, for that very Reason, because it is the least. It is known to be the ordinary Course of skilful Orators to place the meanest Part of their Speech in the middle; and in this let the Ear of any understanding Mind be Judge, whether it sounds not much better, that this Request pass in the middle,
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than if the Prayer should have ended with it, whereas now it begins spiritually and closes so. And this Petition, which is *de impedimentis militiæ nostræ*, (for the things of this Life prove so too often) is cast in the middle.

Now, how few are there that follow Christ's Estimate in this, that have the very Strength of their Desires, and most of their Thoughts on things that are spiritual, and do but in passing lend a Word to the things of this Life *; this Proportion few will admit, it makes not for their Purpose. The Apostle gives this Character of those that perish, that *they mind earthly things*.

But to consider the Words, each Word designing the Matter of this Request doth clearly teach us Moderation in it. *Give us our daily Bread.* *Having Food and Raiment*, (says the Apostle, 1 Tim. vi. 8) *let us be content*. How few be there of us, if any, that want these, and yet how few that have Contentment? It is the Enormity and Boundlessness of our Desires, that causeth this. There is no Necessity of curious Food and Raiment, but such Food as nourishes, and such Raiment as covers.

Our daily Bread, ἐπιβίωσις & in the Original. Not at all to dispute the Word, its genuine Sense is, *such as is fit for our daily Sustentation*, therefore rendered *daily Bread*; and answers well to the Word in that Petition of Agur, Prov. xxx. 8. *convenient* or *proportionable Food*, and so agrees with that we said of Bread; *proportionable*, not to our Lust, but our Necessity. This was the Sin of the Jews, and a most impertinent Sin in the Wilderness; *they asked Meat for their Lust*; they were not content of Bread for themselves, but must have Meat for their Lust too, must have that fed likewise. We are not to be Carvers of the Proportion ourselves, but leave that to God, who knows best what is convenient for us; therefore the Word is

* *Quamprimum à corpore ad animam redeundum.* Sen.

† *Lechem* Talmud. Num. iv. 7.

is there, *of my Set or ordained Portion* †, ordained by thee.

Our Bread, Ἡμῶν.] Not seeking any other but that which is our own by our just Industry, and God's free Gift. What is it but the base immoderate Desire of having, that stretches a Man beyond this? When a Man lays down that Conclusion with himself, that he must have so much, then it follows, that any way tending to that he must use, if he can, by right; but if not, any way rather than miss; by Violence and Oppression, or by Deceit, through all ways fair and foul ‡: When a Man is once upon that Journey there is no stopping, 'till either God recal him, or he plunge himself in the Pit of Destruction. *They that will be rich* (says the Apostle) *that are resolved upon that, they fall into Temptation, and divers Snares, that drown Men, &c.* that is the Issue.

This Day.] It is true that this condemns not a due Providence in Men for themselves and their Families in a just and moderate way; but Men deceive themselves in this, few stay there, but under that Name harbour gross Avarice and Earthliness. But in this Word, we have the true Temper of a Christian Mind, that whatsoever is his own lawful Providence, and whatsoever is the Success of it, that he lives and relies on, is the Providence of God, not his own; he lives upon that from one Day to another, as a Child in his Father's House; and for Provision for afterwards thinks it as good in God's Hand as if it were in his own, and therefore asks not so much Stock or so much yearly Rent, but *Bread for to Day*. If he have much Land or great Revenues, yet trusts no more in that, than if he had nothing; and if he have To-Day, and nothing for To-morrow (as the *Israelites* had Manna) yet trusts no less in God than if he had thousands; he resolves thus, "Whether I have
" much or little I am at God's providing, and live
" upon

† *Lechem Chukki,*

‡ *Si possis rectè, si non, quocunque modo rem.* Hor.

"upon that from Day to Day; *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want*, Psal. xxiii. 1."

These two go together, as we have observed them here together, *Godliness* and *Moderation* *, *Godliness* in this particular, of casting over our Care of temporal things on God by Prayer. *Phil. iv. 5. Let your Moderation be known*, &c. But how shall we have it? *Make your Requests known unto God*, and that in all things; that will ease you, and not trouble him. But when we lodge such Desires as are not fit indeed to be imparted to him, this is our Shame and proves our Vexation. It is a wonder what Men mean; but it is a Folly so rooted in Men's Hearts that no Discourse will pluck it up; they imagine that there is Happiness in having much, and will neither believe Religion, nor Reason, nor Experience, though all teach the contrary. They cannot be persuaded to make this the Rule of their Desires, *daily Bread*, and for *To-day*, but are still projecting for long time to come, though they are not sure of a Day. Men are still beginning to live, even when their Years tell them they should be thinking how to dye; are upon new Contrivances for the World, when they must shortly leave it: And this is one Point of this our Disease, that it grows still, and is strongest in old Age, when there is least Reason for it †.

What is this that Riches can do? Our Saviour tells us, if we will believe him, that *Man's Life doth not consist in the Abundance of the things he possesseth*; ‡ there is something necessary we see, and truly that is not much, and what is more than serves, many times proves but more Encumbrance; one Staff will help a Man in his Way, but a Bundle of Staves would burden and weary him. Would Men but stop a little and ask themselves, 'What is this I do?' 'What do I aim at in all my Turmoil?' It might possibly recal them, would they but hear *Solomon's* Question,

* *Εὐσέβεια, ἀντὶμετρία.* 1 Tim. vi. 6.

† *Quo minus via restat, eo plus viatici comparare.*

‡ *Ad supervacua sudatur.*

Question, and tell him *what good the rich have of possessing more than they use, but only of beholding them with their Eyes*; if there be any thing more, it is more Care and Troubles *. He that hath a hundred Rooms hath but one Body, he can lodge but in one at once; he that might have Sea and Land ransack'd for Delicates to his Table, hath himself but one Appetite to serve with them all.

Then consider that beyond the Bounds of this Petition, if a Man once pass, there be no Bounds after, he knows not where to stay †; one thousand would have something more to save it unspent, and when that grows a little, it is best even to make another thousand, and save that too, and fall a scraping for more.

And if this is always a Frenzy, most of all in these times, *Behold*, says God to *Baruch*, *I will break down that which I have built, and that which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole Land, and seekest thou great things for thyself?* Jer. xlv. 4, 5. “But is it not “Wisdom to be provident, and see far before a Man; “and to look no further but to the present, is the “Character of a Fool?” True it is indeed, and therefore the truly wise Man despises this Providence for a base uncertain Life, and is content if alive but from one Day to another; but there is a higher Design in his Head, a Providence of a further Reach that sees afar off indeed, to make himself an Estate for Eternity, that takes up his Thoughts and Pains; the other is the grossest Short-sightedness, to look no further than a Moment; it is indeed, *μυοπαΐειν*, as St. *Peter* speaks. But that Life the Christian's Eye is upon, is of another Nature, where none of these poor things shall have Place, *No marrying, nor giving in Marriage*, as our Saviour says, so no eating nor drinking, no need of Bread, nor of this Prayer for it, but we shall be *as the Angels of God*.

And

* *Et curæ circum laqueata testa volantes.*

† *Depinge ubi sistam.*

And forgive us our Debts, &c.] Thy loving Kindness, says David, is better than Life. Therefore this Request rises above the former: In it we sought Bread for the present Life; in this we entreat his Favour, not Corn, nor Wine, nor Oil, but that that glads the Heart more than them all, *The Light of his Countenance*, that the thick Cloud of our Sins be dispelled by a free Pardon, as he promises *Isa. xlv. 22.*

In this Petition we have, 1. The Request. 2. The Clause added. That which is here called *Debts*, St. Luke hath *Sins*; and here in the Observation our Saviour adds, they are called, παραπτώματα, *Offences*. Now Sin, as it is called a Debt, is taken for the Guiltiness of Sin, which is no other but *pænas debere*, to owe the suffering of Punishment, or an Obligation to the Curse which the Law hath pronounced against Sin; and because this results so immediately from Sin, therefore Sin is often put for the Engagement to Punishment, so the Apostle's Phrase, *1 Cor. xv. ult.* may be taken. So then, the Debt of Sin being the Tie to Punishment, which follows upon it, the forgiving of Sin can be no other than the acquitting of a Man from that Curse, setting him free from his Debt, his Engagement to suffer; and therefore to imagine a Forgiveness of Sin with retaining of the Punishment, is direct Nonsense and a Contradiction.

To pass the Words of this Request through our Mouths (as the rest) is an easy and common thing, but altogether fruitless; but to offer it as a spiritual Supplication of the Heart unto God, is a thing done but by a few, and to as many as do offer it so, it never returns in vain, but is certainly granted. Now to offer it so as a lively spiritual Suit unto God, there are necessarily supposed in the Soul that presents it, these things,

1. A clear Conviction and deep Sense of the Guiltiness of Sin, both in *general* what this Guiltiness is, what is that Debt that Sin engages us in, that Misery to which it binds us over, 1. As the Deprivation of Happiness, the Loss of God and his Favour for ever.

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2. The

2. The endless Endurance of his Wrath, and hottest Indignation, and all the Anguish that is able to fill the Soul with to all Eternity. Unufferable, inconceivable Torment! described to us by such things as we can understand, but going infinitely beyond them, *A gnawing Worm that dies not, and a Fire that cannot be quenched*, this is the *Portion of the Sinner* from God, and the *Heritage* appointed to him, as *Zophar* speaks. Then in *particular* there must be a seeing our own Guiltiness, a Man must know himself to be nothing else but a Mass of Sin, and so Fuel for that Fire; must see himself a Transgressor of the whole Law of God, and therefore abundantly liable to that Sentence of Death.

2. Upon this Apprehension will follow a very earnest Desire to be free, and such a Word as that, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me!* And seeing no way either to satisfy or escape without a free Pardon, the Soul then looks upon that as its only Happiness, with *David*, *Blessed is the Man, O the Blessedness of that Man! whose Iniquity is forgiven and whose Sin is covered.*

3. In this Request there is a taking of it as a thing attainable, for it is implied that there is no Impossibility in it; and this arises from the Promises of God, and the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace, and the Mediator of that Covenant revealed in the Word apprehended only in their general Tenor.

4. It imports a humble Confession of Guiltiness before the Lord, as follows there, *Psal. xxxii. I acknowledge my Sin, &c. and hide not mine Iniquity*. The Way to find God hiding and covering it, he perceived was for himself not to hide it, the Way to be acquitted at God's Hand, is for the Soul with Humility and Grief to accuse itself before him.

5. Where there is this sensible Knowledge and humble Acknowledgment of Sin and Misery, and earnest Desire of Pardon, then doth a Man truly offer this Suit unto God with strong Affection, *Lord this is my Request, that my Sin may be forgiven; and*

pray

prays it in Faith, which is a more particular laying hold on the Promises, believing that he will forgive, and therefore waits for an Answer, to hear that *Voice of Joy and Gladness*, as *David* speaks; to hear the Word of his Pardon from God spoke into his Soul. And for this Cause (besides the Need of daily Pardon for daily Sins) the most godly Men have need to renew this Suit, that together with Pardon they may obtain the comfortable Persuasion and Assurance of it; and though they have some Assurance, yet there be further Degrees of it possible and desirable; clearer Evidences of Reconcilement and Acceptance with God.

Forgiveness itself is indeed the main, and is often granted, where the other, the Assurance of it, is withheld for a Time, but there is no question that we may, yea, that we ought to desire it, and seek after it. He is blessed that is pardoned, though as yet he know it not, yet doubtless it abates much of his Happiness for the time that he does not know it *.

As the Philosopher says †, *The poor Man thinks him happy that is rich, and the sick Man him that is in Health*; their own Want makes them think so. Now this Forgiveness of Sin is Happiness indeed, yet a Man must first feel the Want of it, before he judge so: but here's the Difference when he hath obtain'd it, he shall think so still; whereas the other being tried, are found to fall short, and do not make any Man happy.

Seeing this is a Request of so great Moment, may we not wonder at ourselves, that are so cold and indifferent in it? But the true Reason of this is, because so few are truly sensible of this heavy Debt, of the Weight of Sin unpardoned. A Man that feels it not prays thus, not much troubling his Thoughts whether it be granted or no; but he that is indeed press'd with the Burden of Sin, cries in earnest, *Lord, forgive*. *David* knew what he said, when he called him *blessed whose Sin is forgiven*, the Word is, that is,

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unloaded

* *Non est beatus, esse qui se non putet.*

† *Aristotle.*

unloaded of his Sin. He was a King, and a great Captain, but he says not, he is a blessed Man that wears a Crown, or that is successful in War, but he whose Sin is taken off his Shoulders; whatsoever he is otherwise, he is a happy Man; it is in vain to offer a Conscience groaning under Sin any thing else, until it be eased of that. If you should see a Man lying grovelling under some Weight that is ready to press him to death, and should bring sweet Musick to him, and cover a Table with Delicates before him, but let him lye still under his Burden, could he (think you) take any Pleasure in those Things? Were it not rather to mock him to use him so?

And though we feel it not as troubled Consciences do, yet we are truly miserable in all Enjoyments, until this Forgiveness be obtained. To what Purpose daily Bread, yea what is the greatest Abundance of all outward Things, but a glittering Misery, if this be wanting? But he that is once forgiven, and received into Favour with God, what can befall him amiss? Though he hath no more of the World but daily Bread, and of the coarsest sort, he hath a continual Feast within: as he that said, *Brown Bread and the Gospel is good Fare.* Now the Gospel is the Doctrine of this Forgiveness of Sin, and is therefore so sweet to an humbled Sinner; yea, though a Man have not only a small Portion of earthly Comforts but be under divers Afflictions and Chastisements yet this makes him chearful in all, as *Luther* said *Feri Domine, &c.* use me as thou wilt, seeing thou hast forgiven my Sin, all is well.

Lastly, As there must be earnest Desire in the Request, so withal firm Belief; *ask in Faith.* If once thou art become a humble Suiter for Mercy, and that is the great Desire of thy Heart, that God would take away thy Sin, and be reconciled to thee; then know that he will not cast back thy Petition in Displeasure, now he is gracious, and whatsoever thou hast been, consider what he is. Doth he receive any for any thing in themselves? What is the Cause he pardon

pardons any, is it not for his own Name's sake? *Isa.* xliii. 25. And will not that Reason serve for thee as much as others? Will it not avail for many Sins, as well as for few? Hast thou multiplied Sin often, abused his Mercy, but now mournest before him for it? then he will multiply to pardon, *Isa.* lv. 7. *Jer.* iii. 1. Thou hast rebelled much, but he is thy Father, and hath the Bowels of a Father to a repenting Child: And this Stile we give him in this Prayer, as fitly urging all our Suits, *Father, forgive us our Sins*; therefore forgive, because thou art our Father. And then consider, that he that puts this Petition amongst the rest in our Mouths, hath satisfied for Believers, paid all their Scores, and answered Justice to the full, and in him we are forgiven: It is a free Forgiveness to us, though he hath paid for it; and he himself was freely given to us, to undertake and satisfy for us. Yet let not any thus embolden themselves to sin; this were the grossest Impudence, to come to crave Pardon of Sin while we delight in it, and to desire it to be forgiven while we have no mind to part with it and forsake it; for this Privilege belongs only to repenting and returning Sinners.

As we forgive our Debtors.] This is added, both as a fit Motive for us to use with God, and a suitable Duty that he requires of us: The former we may perceive in the Manner that *St. Luke* hath it, *For we also*, says he, &c. "Thou, Lord, requirest of us to forgive others, and thou workest it in some of us to do so; how much more then may we hope that thou wilt forgive us? If there be any such Goodness in us, it is from thee, and therefore is infinitely more in thyself, as the Ocean of Goodness."

Again, this is likewise a very profitable Argument to move us to this Duty, as we see clearly by our Saviour's returning to speak of it after the Prayer: It is not only bound upon us by his Precept, but by our Prayer.

This (*as*) just as before in the third Petition, means not Equality in the Degree, but Conformity in the Thing.

Now the Request running thus, they that do not forgive their Brethren, turn it into a most heavy Curse to themselves, and in effect pray daily, *Lord, never forgive me my Sin*; and whether they say thus or no, he will do thus, if we be such Fools as not to accept of such an Agreement. He hath infinite Debt upon our Heads, that we shall never be able to pay; now though there is no Proportion, yet he is graciously pleased without further Reckoning to forgive us all, and discharge us fully, if we accept (*as it were*) of this his Letter of Exchange, and for his sake forgive our Brethren the few Pence that at the most they can be owing us, in lieu of the thousands of Talents that he acquits to us. And by this, as our certain Evidence, we may be assured of our Pardon, and rejoice in it, as our Saviour after clearly affirms; and therefore the contrary (which he likewise tells us) may well take our Debates, and Hatreds, and Desires of Revenge, as a Counterfign, testifying to us, that we are not forgiven at God's Hands.

And think not to satisfy him with superficial Forgivenesses and Reconcilements: Would we be content of such Pardon from God, to have only a present Forbearance of Revenge, or that he should not quarrel with us, but no further Friendship with him; that he should either use Strangeness with us, and not speak to us, or only for Fashion's sake? And yet such are many of our Reconcilements with our Brethren. God's way of forgiving is thorough and hearty, both to forgive and to forget, *Jer. xxxi.* and if thine be not so, thou hast no Portion in his.

What a base miserable Humour is this same Desire of Revenge, this Spirit of Malice that possesses Men, and think themselves brave in it, that they forgive no Injuries, can put up no Affronts, as they speak *Solomon* was of another Mind, and he was a King

and a wise King, and knew well enough what Honour meant; *It is the Glory of a Man to pass by a Transgression*, said he. And we see inferior Magistrates and Officers may punish, but it is a Part of the Prerogative of Kings to pardon; it is Royal to forgive, yea it is Divine, it is to be like God, *Matth. v. Be you perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*; and the Perfection is, *do good to them that persecute you, &c. as he causeth the Sun to shine on the just and unjust.*

There is more true Pleasure in forgiving, than ever any Man found in Revenge: *Fr. Desales* said, "That whereas Men think it so hard a Thing to forgive a Wrong, he found it so sweet, that if the contrary were commanded him, he would have much ado to obey it." Were the Law of Love written in our Hearts, it would be thus with us; it would teach us effectually to forgive others, if we knew and found in our Experience the boundless Love of God in forgiving us.

And lead us not into Temptation, &c.] As the Doctrine of Divine Mercy, mistaken and abused by carnal Minds, emboldens them to sin; so being rightly apprehended and applied, there is nothing more powerful to possess the Heart with Indignation against Sin, and Love of Holiness: So that this Request agrees most fitly with the former; where that is presented aright, the Heart will be no less sincere and earnest in this other. The Guiltiness of Sin, and the prevailing Power of it, are the two Evils that the Godly feel more than all other Pressures in the World; Deliverance from both is jointly promised in the New Covenant, *Jer. xxxi.* and here jointly entreated in these two Petitions. We shall explain,

1. What this *Temptation* and *Evil* is.

2. What is meant by *not lead into it*, and to *deliver*.

Temptation.] In the Original Πειρασμός, a Trial, that which gives Proof of a Man's Strength and of his Disposition, draws forth what is within him.

And thus in most Things we meet withal in the World, there is some *tempting* Faculty to try us what we are, on the using of them; but especially such Things as are more eminent in their Nature, that have much Power with us. As eminent Place and publick Charge try both the Ability and Integrity of Men, Afflictions try the Faith and Stability of Mens Minds. Injuries try whether they are truly meek and patient or no; they stir the Water that was possibly clear at Top, and so try whether it be not muddy at the Bottom *.

But by *Temptation* here are meant, Occasions and Provocations to Sin. So likewise the Word (*Evil*) in the other Clause, is not to be taken for Afflictions and Crosses, but for the *Evil of Sin*, or for that *evil one*, as he is called, 1 *Job*. ii. 13. and that particularly in relation to the Evil of Sin, wherein he hath so frequent and so great a hand.

There be outward Things that are not in themselves evil, and yet prove Temptations to us, because they meet with a depraved corrupt Heart in us; as Riches, and Honour, and Beauty, &c. and to Intemperance, dainty Meats, or the Wine *when it is red in the Cup*, as *Solomon* speaks; and upon these, Men sometimes turn over the Blame of their Disorders, but most foolishly.

Other Temptations and Tempters there be without us, that are themselves evil, and by tempting partake of our Sin; the profane Example and Customs of the World, ungodly Men by their Practices, and Counsels, and Enticements, drawing others to Sin, putting others into the same Mire wherein they are wallowing.

But the most effectual Tempter of all, is that which the Apostle St. *James* gives up as the chief, and without which indeed none other could prevail, *Every Man is tempted of his own Concupiscence*; whosoever it is that begets it, that is the Womb wherein all Sin is conceived, and that *brings it forth*, as he there adds,

* *Natura vexata prodit seipsam.*

adds; yea this were able of itself to be fruitful in Sin, though there were not a Devil to tempt it to it, and doth no doubt often tempt us without his Help.

Yet, because he is so continually busied in this Work, is so constant a Stickler in the greatest part of Sins in the World, therefore it is not unlikely that this is particularly meant of him.

Howsoever, he is out of doubt the greatest of all outward Tempters, (and therefore it is pertinent to consider his Share in them) the most skilful, the most active and diligent, and he that manages all other kind of Temptations against us, both such as are without us in the World, and, such as are within us, he works upon our own Corruption, stirring and blowing it up by his Suggestions, and sometimes throwing in Balls of his own infernal Fire, that are grievous and abominable to the Soul into which he casts them. It is his Name and Profession, *ὁ πειράζων*, that great Pirate, that robs upon all Seas, that is every where catching the Souls of Men. And he is well seen in his Trade, a knowing Spirit, that manifested his Skill shrewdly in his first Essay against Man, that Serpent's first Poison killed the whole Race of Mankind; and now he is perfected by long Experience and Practice, hath his Methods, as Arts after a time are drawn into Method. He hath his Topicks, his several Sorts of Temptations for several Tempers, and hath great Insight into the Subject he is to work upon, and so fits the one to the other.

The Profane that will be easily drawn to the grossest Sins, he is not at the Pains to find out other ways for them, but hurries them along in that high way to Destruction, using his Advantage either of their gross Ignorance or Hardness of Heart, &c. Others that are resolved to live outwardly blameless, he endeavours to take and hold fast to himself by Pride, and Self-love, and Malice, and Covetousness, by Formality in Religion, Unbelief, which are things, though smaller wrought than some others, yet that are as strong,

strong, and hold Men as fast to be led captive at his Will.

And the Godly, because they are escaped and set free from his Tyranny, and he is desperate of reducing them, yet because he can do no more, he is sure to be a perpetual Vexation and Trouble to them, so far as he is let loose; he is most unwearied in his Assaults, gives them no Respite *, neither when he gains upon them, nor when he is foiled and repulsed. Let us next consider,

2. What the Request is,—not to be *led* into Temptation, —and, to be *delivered*,

Lead us not.] Not that God doth sollicite a Man to Sin, for that is most contrary to his pure Nature, as St. James tells us plainly, *He is neither so tempted, nor tempts he any*: But his leading into Temptation is briefly, 1. To permit a Man to be tempted. 2. To withdraw his Grace, and so deliver up a Man into the Hand or Power of the Temptation. Now this is that we pray, that the Lord be pleased either to bear off Assaults from us, and suffer us not to be tempted; or if he let Temptation loose upon us, yet to give us the better, to order it so that it overcome us not. That which is here meant by leading, or carrying us into Temptation, is the prevailing of it, or leading us unto a Foil; and this we pray, that he would not do, that if he do bring us into the Conflict of a Temptation he would not leave us there, but bring us fair off again; and thus the whole Petition runs, *lead us not, but deliver us*. And in this it is, that he would furnish us with his own Grace, the holy Habits of Grace to be within us, as a constant Garrison. And then, that either he countermand our Enemy from assaulting, or that they be such as overmatch not the Strength he hath given us, but may be below it; or that he send us the auxiliary Strength of supervenient assisting Grace to that we have, that howsoever the Forces that come against us may be turned backward,

* 'Ουδὲ νικᾷ ἡμᾶς ἡ κακία.

backward, and we may have the Comfort, and he the Glory of our Victories.

So then in this we are taught. 1. To know the Danger wherein we are; that we live in the midst of Enemies, and such as are strong and subtile, that we have the Prince of Darkness plotting against us, and the treacherous Corruption of our own Hearts ready to keep Correspondence with him, and betray us to him. That he hath Gins and Snares laid for us in all our Ways, *Laqueos ubique, laqueos in cibo & potu, &c. Aug. Med.* in our Solitude and in our Converse, in our eating and drinking, yea Snares in our spiritual Exercise, our Hearing, Preaching, Prayer, &c. and therefore as he here teaches us to pray against them, we must join that, to *watch* against them. 2. To be sensible of our own Weakness and Insufficiency, either for avoiding or overcoming these Dangers. 3. To know the All-sufficient Strength of God, his Sovereign Power over all adverse Powers, that they are all under his Command, so that he can keep them off us, or subdue them under us as he pleaseth, and so to have our Recourse to this, and rest in it. The first of these Considerations, if it take with us, will stir us up to Watchfulness, and the other two will persuade to Prayer; and these are the two great Preservatives against Temptation that our Saviour prescribes, *Watch and pray, lest you enter into Temptation: Watch*, how can we sleep secure, and so many Enemies that sleep not? If we pray and watch not, we tempt God, and we lead ourselves into Temptation. It is our Duty (mock the Word who will) to walk exactly or precisely, *ἀκριβῶς*, to look to every Step, to beware of the least Sins: For they, 1. By multitude make up a great Weight. 2. They prove usually Introductions to greater Sins: admit but some inordinate Desire into your Heart that you account a small Matter, and it is a hundred to one but it shall prove a little Thief got in, to open the Door to a Number of greater; as the *Rabbins* speak, a less Evil brings a Man into the Hands of a greater *.

2. Avoid

* *Levius malum inducit in manus gravioris.* Dros.

2. Avoid not only Sins but the Incentives and Occasions to Sin ; as St. *Chrysoftom* observes well that of our Saviour, *when they shall say, here is Christ and there is Christ, he says not, believe them not, but go not forth to see ;* and *Solomon's* Instruction for avoiding the Allurements of the strange Woman, says not only, *go not in, but come not near the Door of her House.* The Way of Sin is down hill † ; a Man cannot stop where he would, and he that will be tampering with dangerous Occasions, in confidence of his Resolution, shall find himself often carried beyond his Purpose. If you pray, then watch too ; but as that Word commands our Diligence, so this imports our Weakness in ourselves, and our Strength to be in another, that as we watch we must pray, and without this we shall watch in vain, and be a Prey to our Enemy. Truly had we no Power beyond our own, we might give over, and be hopeless of coming through to Salvation, so many Enemies and Hazards in the Way. *Alas!* might a Christian say, looking upon the Multitude of Temptations without, and Corruptions within himself, and the Weakness of the Grace he hath, *How can this be ? shall I ever attain my Journey's End ?* But again when he looks upward, and lifts his Eyes above his Difficulties, beholds the Strength of God engaged for him, directs his Prayers to him for Help, and is assured to find it ; this upholds him, and answers all. There is a roaring Lion that seeks to devour, but there is a strong rescuing Lion, *the Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, that will deliver. *The God of Peace*, says the Apostle, *will bruise Satan under your Feet shortly.* He says not, *we* shall bruise him under our Feet, but *God* shall do it ; yet he says not, he shall bruise him under *his own* Feet, but under *yours* ; the Victory shall be ours, though wrought by him ; and he shall do it *shortly*, wait a while and it shall be done ; and *the God of Peace*, because he is the God of Peace, he shall subdue that grand Disturber of your Peace, and shall give you a perfect Victory, and after it, endless Peace ;

† *Motus in proclivi.*

Peace; he shall free you of his Trouble and Molestation. Grace is a Stranger here, and therefore hardly used, and hated by many Foes; but there is a Promise of a new Heaven and a new Earth, where dwells Righteousness, there it shall be at home, and quiet, no Spoiling nor Robbery in all that holy Mountain.

For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

This Pattern (we know) is the Line under which all our Prayers ought to move, all our Requests to be conform to it; and are certainly out of their Way, when they decline and wander from it. And if we observe it, we may clearly perceive it is a circular Line; as indeed the Exercise of Prayer is a heavenly Motion, circular as that of the Heavens, begins and ends in the same Point, the Glory of that God to whom we pray, and who is the God that heareth Prayer. In that Point this Prayer begins, and here ends in it, so that our Requests that concern ourselves are cast in the middle, that all our Desires may move within this Circle; though the things we pray for concern ourselves, yet are not to terminate in ourselves but in him, who is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and End of all things; to desire not only the Blessings of this Life, but the Blessedness of the Life to come, more for his Glory than for our own Good.

This is genuine and pure Love of God, in the Pardon of our Sins and Salvation, to rejoice more in the Glory of divine Mercy, than in our own personal Happiness; thus it shall be with us, when we shall be put in Possession of it, and we ought to aspire to that Measure of the same Mind that can be attained here, while we are in the Desire and Hopes of it.

For thine is the Kingdom.] Though this Clause is left out in divers Translations, and wanting in some Greek Copies, yet it is so agreeable to the Nature of Prayer, and the Perfection of this Prayer, that we ought not to let it pass unconsidered.

There is in it an Enforcement of our Prayer, but especially it is a Return of Praise; " Good Reason
" we

“ we desire earnestly the sanctifying of thy Name, and
 “ coming of thy Kingdom, and Obedience to thy
 “ Will, seeing these are so peculiarly due to thee,
 “ namely, Kingdom, and Power, and Glory; and
 “ seeing thou art so great and rich a King, may we
 “ not crave with Confidence at thy Hands all needful
 “ good things to be bestowed on us, and that all
 “ Evil may be averted from us, that we may find
 “ thee gracious to us, both in giving and forgiving;
 “ and as in forgiving us the Guiltiness of Sin, so in
 “ freeing us from the Power of Sin, and preserving
 “ us from the Power of our spiritual Enemies that
 “ would draw us into Sin? We are under thy Royal
 “ Protection, we are thy Subjects, yea thy Children,
 “ thou art our King and Father, so that thy Honour
 “ is engaged for our Defence. Whatsoever Sum our
 “ Debts amount to, they are not too great for such
 “ a King to forgive, they cannot rise above thy Roy-
 “ al Goodness; and whatsoever be our Enemies, all
 “ their Force is not above thy Sceptre; though they
 “ be strong, too strong for us, yet thou art much
 “ more too strong for them, for Power is thine; and
 “ this we know, that all the good thou dost us, will
 “ bring back Glory to thy Name, and it is that we
 “ most desire, and that which is thy Due; the *Glory*
 “ *is thine.*”

Thus we see all our Places of Argument for our
 Requests are in God, none of them in ourselves; as
 we find this in the Prayers of the Prophets, *for thine*
own Glory, and *for thine own Name's Sake*; nothing in
 ourselves to move God by, but Abundance of Misfe-
 ry, and that moves not but by Reason of his Bounty;
 so still the Cause of his hearing, and the Argument of
 our entreating, is in himself alone. Were it not thus,
 how could we hope to prevail with him? yea, how
 durst we offer to come unto him? It is well for us
 there is enough in himself both to encourage us to
 come, and to furnish us with Motives to persuade
 him by, that we come not in vain. *Moses* had not
 a Word to say for the People in themselves, such was
 their

their Carriage, his Mouth was stopt that Way, yet he doth not let go this, "What wilt thou do with thy mighty Name? it is true they have trespassed, yet if thou destroy them, thy Name will suffer. Lord consider and regard that, and we know the Success of it." Thus a Christian for himself, Lord, I am most unworthy of all those things I request of thee, but whatsoever I am, thou art a liberal and mighty King, and it is thy Glory to do good freely, therefore it is that I come unto thee; my Necessities drive me to thee, and thy Goodness draws me, and the poorer and wretcheder I am, the greater will be thy Glory in helping me."

But it is withal an extolling and praising the Greatness of God, and so we are to consider it.

Thine is the Kingdom.] "Other Kings and Kingdoms there be, but they are as nothing, they deserve not the naming in comparison of thine; they are but Kings of little Mole-hills, to the Bounds of thy Dominion; the greatest Kingdoms of the World are but small Parcels of this Globe of Earth, and itself all together, to the vast Circumference of the Heavens, is as nothing, loses all sensible Greatness. This Point that Men are so busy dividing among them with Fire and Sword, what if one Man had the Sovereignty of it all? he and Kingdom both were nothing to thine; for Sea and Land, Earth and Heaven, and all the Creatures in them all, the whole, all is thine; thou art Lord of Heaven and Earth, and therefore the Kingdom is thine. As all other Kingdoms are less than thine, so they hold of thine, thine is supreme; all the Crowns and Scepters of the Earth hang at thy Footstool." All Kings owe their Homage to this great King, and he disposeth of their Crowns absolutely and uncontrolled as he will, he enthrones and dethrones at his Pleasure, throws down one and sets up another; as we have a great Monarch confessing it at length, upon his own Experience, being brought down from his

his

his Throne, on purpose to learn this Lesson, and was seven Years in learning on't, *Dan. iv. 34.*

The Power.] The Creatures have among them several Degrees and several Kinds of Power, but none of them, nor all of them together have all Power, this is God's. He is All-powerful in himself, primitively powerful, and all the Power of the Creatures is derived from him, he is the Fountain of Power. So that whatsoever Power he hath given unto Men, or any other Creature, he hath not given away from himself; it is still in himself more than in them, and at his Pleasure he can call it back, and withdraw the Influence of it, and then they remain weak and powerless. And when he gives them Power, he useth and disposeth of both them and their Power as seems him good; therefore his Stile is, *the Lord of Hosts.* He can command more Armies than all the Kings and Princes of the Earth, from the most excellent to the meanest of the Creatures, all are his trained Bands, from the Host of glorious Spirits, to the very Armies of Grasshoppers and Flies; and you know, that as an Angel was employed against the *Egyptians*, so likewise these contemptible Creatures were upon Service there too, and being armed with Commission, and with Power from God, did perform the Service upon which they were sent so effectually that the wisest of Heathens were forced to confess *this is the Finger of God.*

This is the Lord to whom we address our Prayers that cannot fail in any thing for want of Power, for he doth what he will in Heaven and in Earth.

Glory.] In these two consists mainly the Eminence of Kings, in their Power and their Majesty; but they exceed not the meanest of their Subjects, so far as this King surpasseth the greatest of them in both, *Psa. xciii. 1. Clothed with both Majesty and Strength.* They are often resisted, and cut short of their Designs for Want of sufficient Power, and are the best of them often driven to Straits; sometimes Men, sometimes Money or Munition, or some other necessary

Help is wanting, and so their Enterprizes fall behind; but this King can challenge and defy all Oppositions; *I work*, (says he) *and who shall let it*.

And as their Power, so their Majesty and Glory is infinitely short of his; he is *the King of Glory*, as the *Psalmist* stiles him, alone truly glorious, both in the Excellency of his own Nature, and the extrinſical Glory that arises to him out of his Works. Of the former we can know but little here, for that Light wherein he dwells is to us inaccessible; but this we know, that he is infinitely above all the Praises even of those that do behold him. Likewise how unspeakable is that Glory that shines in his Works! in the framing of the whole World, and in the upholding and ruling of it from the Beginning, in which appear the two former that are here ascribed to him, his *Kingdom* and his *Power*, and so this third, his *Glory*, springs out of both. Then if we consider the glorious Attendance that is continually about his Throne, as the Scriptures describe it to us, it drowns all the Pomp of earthly Thrones and Courts in their highest Degree, See *Apoc. iv.*

For ever.] This Kingdom, and Power, and Glory of God, besides their transcendent Greatness, have this Advantage beyond all other Kingdoms, and Power, and Glory, that his are *for ever and ever*; all other are perishing, nothing but Pageants and Shows that appear for a while, and pass along and vanish. It was a wise Word of a King, (especially at such a Time) when he was riding in a stately Triumph, and ask'd by one of his Courtiers, thinking to please him, What is wanting here? he answered, *Continuance*. Where are all the magnifick Kings that have reign'd in former Ages? Where is their Power and their Pomp? Is it not past like a Dream? And not only are the Kings gone, but the Kingdoms themselves, the greatest in the World fallen to nothing; they had their Time of rising, and again of declining, and are buried in the Dust: That golden-headed Image had brittle Feet, and that was the Ruin and Break

of it all. But this Kingdom of the most High is an everlasting Kingdom, and his Glory and Power abide for ever. Not only Things on Earth decay, but the very *Heavens wax old as a Garment*, (says the Psalmist) *but thou, O Lord, art still the same, and thy Years have no End.*

1. It is a Thing of very great Importance for us to have our Hearts establish'd in the Belief of these Things, and to be frequent in remembring and considering them; to know that the Kingdom is the Lord's, that he sovereignly rules the World, and all Things in it, and particularly the great Affairs of his Church; that he is the mighty God, and therefore that there is no Power, or Wisdom, nor Counsel of Men, able to prevail against him; and that in those Things wherein his Glory seems to suffer for the present, it shall gain and be advanced in the Closure.

2. Let us always, and in all Things, return this to him as his peculiar Due; "Thine is the Glory, "it belongs to thee, and to none other," *Deo quæ Dei sunt.*

3. Let us think most reverently of God: Oh that we could attain to esteeming Thoughts of him, to think more of his Greatness and Excellency beyond all the World! It is our great Folly to admire any thing but God, this is because we are ignorant of him; certainly he knows not God, that thinks any thing great beside him.

Amen. In this Word concenter all the Requests, and are put up together; *so be it.* And there is in it withal (as all observe) a Profession of Confidence that it shall be so. It is from one Root with these Words that signify *Believing* and *Truth*, the Truth of God's Promises persuades Belief, and it persuades to hope for a gracious Answer of Prayer. And this is the excellent Advantage of the Prayer of Faith, that it quiets and establishes the Heart in God. Whatsoever be its Estate and Desire, when once he hath put his Petition into God's Hand, he rests content

tent in holy Security and Assurance concerning the Answer, refers it to the Wisdom and Love of God, how and when he will answer; not doubting that whatsoever it be, and whensoever, it shall both be gracious and seasonable. But the Reason why so few of us find that Sweetness and Comfort that is in Prayer, is, because the true Nature and Use of it is so little known.

A N

E X P O S I T I O N

O F T H E

Ten Commandments.

Exod. XX. 1.

And God spake all these Words, saying.

IT is the Character of the blessed Man, and the Way of Blessedness, *to delight in the Law of God*, Psal. i. And because the Eye is often upon that whereon the Affection and Delight of the Heart is set; the Sign of that Delight in the Law, is to have the Eye of the Mind much upon it, *to meditate on it Day and Night*. And that we may know this is not, as the Study of many Things are, empty Speculation and fruitless barren Delight, we are further taught, the Soul (as fixed in this Delight and Meditation) is a Tree well planted, and answerably fruitful. The Mind that is set upon this Law, is fitly set for bearing Fruit, *Planted by the Rivers of Water* and is really fruitful, *Bringeth forth its Fruit in his Season*.

If this holds true of the Law in the largest Sense taken for the whole Will of God revealed in his Word, it is no doubt particularly verified in that which more particularly bears the Name of *the Law*

this same Summary of the Rule of Man's Life, delivered by the Lord himself, after so singular a Manner, both by Word and Writ.

So then the Explication of it being needful for the Ignorant, it will be likewise profitably delightful for those that be most knowing and best acquainted with it; it is a rich Mine, that we can never dig to the Bottom of. He is called the *blessed Man*, that is still digging and seeking further into the Riches of it, *Meditating on it Day and Night*. His Work going forward in the Night, when others cease from working.

We have in the Creed, the Object of Faith; in the Law, the Exercise and Trial of Love: *For Love is the fulfilling of the Law*; and, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*, saith our Saviour. And Prayer is the breathing of Hope, or, as they call it, *Interpretatio spei*. Thus in these three Summaries are the Matter of these three prime *Theological Virtues*, *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*.

The Law rightly understood addresses us to the Articles of our Faith: For seeing the Disproportion of our best Obedience to the Exactness of the Law, this drives us to seek Salvation in the Gospel by believing; and our natural Inability to believe, drives us to Prayer, that we may obtain Faith and Perseverance in it, at his Hands who is both the first Author and Finisher of our Faith.

The Preparation enjoined the People, teacheth the Holiness of this Law; the Fire, and Thunder, and Lightning, and upon these, the Fear of the People, testify the Greatness and Majesty of the Law giver, and withal his Power to punish the Transgressors of it, and Justice that will punish; that as he shewed his Presence by Fire seen in delivering this Law, so he is (as the Apostle teacheth us, alluding to this) a *consuming Fire* to them that neglect and disobey it. The Limits set about the Mount, that they might not approach it, even after all their Endeavour of sanctifying and preparing, read Humility to us, teach-

ing us our great Distance from the Holiness of our God, even when we are most holy and exactest in our Preparations. Next,

Sobriety, *φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν*, not to pry into hidden Things *, to hear what is revealed to us, and commanded us, and to exercise ourselves in that. *Hidden Things belong unto God, &c.* And lastly, That the Law of itself is the Ministration of Death, and hath nothing but Terror in it, till the Messiah the Mediator appear, and the Soul by his perfect Obedience be accounted obedient to the Law ; but we must not insist on this now.

God spake.] The Preface is twofold. 1. That of *Moses*. 2. Of God himself.

These Words.] Ten Words, *Exod.* xxxiv. 28. and *Deut.* v. 22. He added no more. Hence we may learn, (1.) The Perfection of this Law, that no more was needful to be added. (2.) The Excellency of it, being so short, and yet so perfect. For as it is the Excellency of all Speech, as of Coin, as *Plutarch* hath it) to contain much in little, most Value in smallest Quantity ; so especially of Laws that they be brief and full.

That we may the better conceive of the Perfection of this Law, we must not forget these Rules that Divines give for the understanding of it in its due Latitude. (1.) That the Prohibitions of Sin contain the Commands of the contrary Good, otherwise the Number of Precepts would have been too great. And on the contrary, (2.) Under the Name of any one Sin, all homogeneous, or Sins of that kind are forbidden, (3.) All the Inducements and Occasions of Sin, things that come near a Breach, to be avoided ; that which the *Rabbins* call the *Hedge* of the Law, not to be broken. They that do always that they lawfully may, sometimes do more. (4.) 'Tis spiritual, hath that Prerogative above all human Laws, reaches the Heart, and all the Motions of it as well as Words and Actions. This supreme Law-giver

* *Scrutator Majestatis opprimetur a gloria.*

giver alone can see the Behaviour of the Heart, and alone is able to punish all that offend, so much as in Thought. It were a vain thing for Men to give Laws to any, more than that they can require Account of and correct, which is only the Superfice and Outside of human Actions. But he that made the Heart, doth not only give his Law to it, but to it principally, and examines all Actions there in their Source and Beginning, and therefore oftentimes that which Men applaud and reward, and do well in so doing, he justly hates and punishes.

God spake.] All that was spoken by his Messengers the Prophets with Warrant from him, was his Word, they but the Trumpets which the Breath of his Mouth, his Spirit, made to sound as it pleased him; but this his moral Law he privileged with his own immediate Delivery. Men may give some few Rules for Society and civil Life, by the dark Light that remains in natural Consciences; but such a Rule as may direct a Man to answer his natural End, and lead him to God, must come from himself. All the purest and wisest Laws that Men have compiled cannot reach that, they can go no higher in their Course, than they are in their Spring, *That which is from the Earth is earthly*, saith our Saviour.

He added to this speaking, the *writing* of them likewise himself in Tables of Stone, that they might abide, and be conveyed to after Ages. At first they were written in the Heart of Man by God's own Hand; but as the first Tables of Stone fell and were broken, so was it with Man's Heart, by his Fall his Heart was broken, and scattered amongst the earthly perishing things, that was before whole and entire to his Maker; and so the Characters of that Law written in it, were so shivered and scattered, that they could not be perfectly and distinctly read in it; therefore it pleased God to renew that Law after this Manner, by a most solemn Delivery with audible Voice, and then by writing it on Tables of Stone. And this

is not all, but this same Law he doth write anew in the Hearts of his Children.

Why it pleased him to defer this solemn Promulgation of the Law to this time, and at this time to give it to a select People only, these are *arcana imperii* indeed, which we are not to search into, but to magnify his Goodness to us, that he hath shewed us the Path of Life, revealing to us both the Precepts of this Law, and the Grace and Promises of the Gospel.

It was the All-wise God that spake all these Words, therefore he knew well his own Aim and Purpose in them, and doth certainly attain it.

It was not indeed that this Law might be the adequate and compleat Means of Man's Happiness, that by perfect Obedience to it he might be saved; for the Law is weak for this, not in itself, but thro' the Flesh, *Rom. viii. 3.* altogether impossible for it alone to save us, because impossible for us to fulfil it.

But it doth profit us much if we look aright upon it. 1. It discovers us to ourselves, and so humbles us, frees us from the Pride that is so natural to us in the midst of our great Poverty and Wretchedness: For when we see how pure the Law is, and we compared with it to be all Filthiness and Defilement, *Our best Righteousness* (as *Isaiab* says) *as filthy Rags*; this causeth us to abhor ourselves: Whereas naturally we are abused with Self-love, and Self-flattery arising from it. The Point of the Law (as they in the *Acts* were said to be pricked in their Hearts) pricks the Heart, that is swelled and puffed up with Pride, and makes it fall low in Sense of Vileness.

2. As this Discovery humbles us in ourselves, it drives us out of ourselves. This Glass shewing us our Pollution, sends us to *the Fountain opened*; when we perceive that by the Sentence of the Law, there is nothing for us but Death, this makes us hearken diligently to the News of Redemption and Pardon proclaimed in the Gospel, and hastens us to the Me-

diator

diator of the new Covenant. As the Spouse was then singularly rejoiced to find her Beloved, when she had been beaten and hardly used by reproaching; the Soul is then gladdest to meet with Christ, when it is hardest buffeted with the Terrors and Threatening of the Law.

His Promise of Ease and Refreshment sounds sweet after the Thunderings and Lightnings of Mount *Sinai*. A Man will never go to Christ so long as he is not convinced of Misery without him, of Impotency in himself, and in all others to help him.

3. It restrains the Wickedness even of ungodly Men; the Brightness of it makes them sometimes ashamed of those Works of Darkeness, which otherwise they would commit without Check; and the Terrors of it affright them sometimes from that, which they would otherwise commit without Shame.

4. But chiefly it serves for a Rule, and Square of Life to the Godly, *A Light to their Feet*, (as *David* says) *and a Lamborn to their Paths*. Either they have no Rule of Life, (which is impious and unreasonable to think) or this is it. Christ came not to dissolve it, but to accomplish and establish it; and he did carefully free it from the injurious Glosses of the *Pharisees*, and taught the right Sense and Force of it, *Matth. v.* He obeyed it both in doing and suffering, both performing what it requires, and in our stead undergoing what it pronounces against those that perform it not. It is a Promise primely intended for the Days of the Gospel, as the Apostle applies, *I will write my Law in their Hearts*. It is a weak Conceit arising upon the Mistake of the Scriptures, to make Christ and *Moses* as Opposites; no, *Moses* was the Servant in the House, and Christ the Son; and being a faithful Servant, he is not contrary to the Son, but subordinate to him. The very Abolishment of the Ceremonial Law was not as of a thing contrary; but as a thing accomplished in Christ, and so was an honourable Abolishment. And the removing of the Curse and Rigour of the moral Law from us, was
thout

without Wrong to it, being satisfied in a better for us, our Surety *Jesus Christ*.

They are happy that look so on the Law of God, as to be made sensible of Misery by it, and by that made earnest in their Desires of Christ, and that judge themselves; the more Evidence they have of Freedom from the Curse of the Law, to be not the less, but so much the more obliged to obey the Law; that are still making Progress, and going on in that way of Obedience, though it be with continual halting, and often stumbling, and sometimes falling; yet they shall certainly attain their Journey's End, that Perfection whereof they are so desirous.

This were the Way to Lowliness, not to compare ourselves with others, in which too many are often partial Judges, but with this holy Law. We use not to try the Evenness of things with our crooked Stick, but by the straightest Rule that we can find. Thus *St. Paul, The Law is spiritual, I am carnal*: He looks not how much he was more spiritual than other Men, but how much less spiritual than the Law.

I am the Lord.] This is the truest and most constant Obedience, which flows jointly from Reverence and Love. These two are the very Wheels upon which Obedience moves. And these first Words of the Law are most fit and powerful to work these two; *Yehovah*; Sovereign Lord to be feared and revered; * *Thy God*; and then, that hath wrought such a Deliverance for thee; Therefore in both these respects most worthy of the highest Love.

This Preface cannot stand for a Commandment, as some would have it: For expressly it commands nothing, though by Inference it enforceth all the Commandments, and is indeed so intended. Though it may be conceived to have a particular Ty with the first Commandment which follows it immediately, yet certainly it is withal a most fit Preface to them all, and hath a persuasive Influence into them all; commanding Attention and Obedience, not in the low Way of human Rhetorick, but *stilo imperatorio*,

* *Tò ἰδιον.*

in a kingly Phrase, becoming the Majesty of *the King of Kings, I am Jehovah.*

Here we have three Motives to Obedience, 1. His universal Sovereignty, *Jehovah.* 2. His particular Relation to his own People, *Thy God.* 3. The late singular Mercy bestowed on them, *That brought thee out of the Land of Egypt.* Each of them sufficient, and therefore all together most strongly concluding for Obedience to his Commandments.

1. *Jehovah.* Not to insist on the ample Consideration of this Name of God, of which Divines, both *Jewish* and *Christian* have said so much, some more cabbalistically and curiously, others more soberly and solidly. This they agree in, that it is the incommunicable Name of the Divine Majesty, and signifies the Primitiveness of his Being, and his Eternity; that his Being is not derived, but is in and from himself; and that all other Being is from him: That he is from everlasting to everlasting in himself, without any Difference of time; but as Eternity is exprest to our conceiving, *He who is, and who was, and who is to come, Alpha and Omega.*

Now it is most reasonable, that seeing all things, Mankind, and all the Creatures that serve for his Good, receive their Being from him, we likewise receive Laws from him.

2. His Majesty is alone absolute and independent; and all the Powers of the World, the greatest Princes and Kings, hold their Crown of him, are his Vassals, and owe Obedience to his Laws, as much as their meanest Subjects, that I say not more, in regard of the particular Obligation, that their Honour and Eminency given them by him, doth lay upon them.

3. *Jehovah.* What are the numerous Stiles wherein Princes delight and glory so much, but a vain Noise of nothing in comparison of his Name, *I am?* And in all their Grandeur, they are low petty Majesties, when mention is made of this *Jehovah, Who stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of*

the Earth, and formed the Spirit of Man within him, Zach. xii. 1. What gives a Man, when he gives all the Obedience he can, and gives himself in Obedience to God? What gives he him, but what he hath first received from him, and therefore owes it all as soon as he begins to be?

This Authority of the Law-giver is the very Life of the Law; it is that we so readily forget, and that is the Cause of all Disobedience, and therefore the Lord inculcates it often, *Levit. xix. 36, 37. I am the Lord, Ver. 31.* and again repeated, *Ver. 37.*

This is the Apostle St. James's Argument, by which he strongly proves his Conclusion, *That he that transgresseth in one, is guilty of all.* He urges not the Concatenation of Virtues in themselves, though there is Truth and Force in that, he that hath one hath all; and so, he that wants any one hath none: But the Sameness of the Authority is his *Medium*, *For he that said, Thou shalt not commit Adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill,* Jam. ii. The Authority is the same, and equal in all. The golden Thread on which these Pearls are strung, if it be broke in any one Part, it scatters them all. This Name of God signifying his Authority, keeps the whole Frame of the Law together, and if that be stirred, it falls all asunder.

Thy God.] Necessity is a strong but a hard Argument, if it go alone. The Sovereignty of God ties all, either to obey his Law, or undergo the Punishment. But Love is both strong and sweet, where there sounds Love in the Command, and the Relation of the Commander, there it is received and chearfully obeyed by Love. Thus then, "*Thy God*, in Covenant with thee," cannot but move thee.

We see then the Gospel interwoven with the Law, *Thy God* often repeated, which is by the new Covenant, and that by a Mediator. God expects Obedience from his peculiar People, it is their Glory and Happiness that they are his. It adds nothing to him, but much every way to them; he is pleased to take

it as Glory done to him, to take him to be our God, and doth really exalt and honour those that do so, with the Title and Privileges of *his People*, *Deut. ii. 17, 18.* If his own Children break his Law, he cannot but take that worse.

Who brought thee out of the Land of Egypt.] By the Remembrance of their late great Deliverance, he mollifies their Hearts to receive the Impression of this Law.

Herein was the peculiar Obligation of this People; but ours, typified by this, is not less, but unspeakably greater, from the cruel Servitude of Sin, and the Prince of Darkness; from these we are delivered, not to Licentiousness, and Libertinism, but to true Liberty. *If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed.* *Delivered*, Luke i. *from the Power of our Enemies.* To what End? *To serve him without Fear*, that Terror which we would be subject to, if we were not delivered; and to serve him *all the Days of our Lives*: And that *all*, if many hundred times longer than it is, yet too little for him. It is not such a Servitude as that of *Egypt*, from which we are delivered, that ended to each one with his Life; but the Misery from which we are redeemed, begins but in the Fulness of it when Life ends, and endures for ever.

The Gospel sets not Men free to Profaneness; no, it is a Doctrine of Holiness, *We are not called to Uncleaness, but to Holiness*, (saith the Apostle;) he hath indeed taken off the Hardness, the iron Yoke, and now his Commandments are not grievous. *His Yoke is easy, and his Burden light*; and they that are most sensible, and have most Assurance of their Deliverance, are ever the most active and fruitful in Obedience; they feel themselves light and nimble, having the heavy Chains and Fetters taken off, *Psal. cxvi. 16.* *Lord, I am thy Servant, thou hast loosed my Bonds*: And the comfortable Persuasion of their Redemption, is that *Oil of Gladness* that supples and disposes them to run the Way of God's Commandments.

P R E C E P T I.

Thou shalt have no other Gods but me.

The first thing in Religion is to state the Object of it right, and to acknowledge and receive it for such. This, I confess, is the Intent of this first Precept of the *Law*, which is therefore the *Basis* and Foundation that bears the Weight of all the rest; and therefore (as we said before) though the Preface looks to them all, yet it looks first to this that is nearest to it, and is knit with it, and through it to all the rest. The Preface asserted his Authority as the Strength of his Law, and this first Precept commands the Acknowledgment and embracing of that his Authority, and his alone as God. And this is the Spring of our Obedience to all his Commandments.

But before a particular Explication of this, a Word, 1. Of the *Division* of this Law. 2. The *Stile* of it.

I. *Division*. That they were divided, 1. Into two Tables. 2. Into ten Words or Commandments, none can question. We have the Lawgiver's own Testimony clear for that; but about the particular way of dividing them into ten, and the matching of these two Divisions together, there hath been, and still is some Difference; but this I will not insist on. Though *Josephus* and *Philo* the Jew would (to make the Number equal) have five Precepts in each Table; yet the Matter of them is more to be regarded, and persuades the contrary, that those that concern *Piety*, our Duty to God, be in the first Table; and those together in the second that concern *Equity*, or our Duty to Man; and the Summary that our *Saviour* gives of the two Tables is evidently for this. And that those Precepts of *Piety*, those of the first Table are *four*, and they of the second *six*. And so that first and second, as we have them, are different and make two, and the tenth but one, hath the Voice both

both of Antiquity and Reason, as many Divines on the *Decalogue* do usually evince at large; which therefore were as easy, as it is needless to do over again.

The Mud of the *Romish* Church to the contrary, is plainly impudent Presumption and Partiality, chusing rather to blot out the *Law*, than reform their manifest Breach of it.

2. That I would say of the *Stile* of the Commandments, is but in this one particular, briefly: We see the greatest Part of them are *Prohibitive*, or (as we usually call them, though somewhat improperly) *Negative*. *Thou shalt not*, &c. This, as is observed by *Calvin* and others, intimates our natural Bent and Inclinement to Sin, that it suffices not to shew us what ought to be done, but we are to be held and bridled by Countermands from the Practices of Ungodliness and Unrighteousness.

Thou shalt not have, &c.] This Order here, and so in the rest, 1. The Scope. 2. The Sense of the Words. 3. What it forbids. 4. What it commands: And these follow each upon other; for out of the Scope the Sense is best gathered, and from that the Breach and Observation.

As the second Commandment concerns the solemn Form of divine Worship, that it be not such as we devise, but as himself appoints. The third, the Qualification or Manner of it, not vainly and profanely, but with holy Reverence. The fourth, the solemn time set apart for it, the Sabbath. So, this first Precept aims at somewhat which is previous to all these.

Many distinguish this and the second, *per Cultum internum & externum*, by the internal and external Worship: And a grave modern Divine, espying some Defect in that, doth it, *per Cultum naturalem & institutum*, by natural and institute. But I confess, both omit, at least they express not (it may be they take it as implied) that which is mainly intended, The Object of Worship; that that *Jehovah* that gave, and

and himself spake this *Law*, be received and acknowledged for the only true God, and so the only Object of divine Worship. And this is that which he calls, *Cultus naturalis, natural Worship*, that primitive Worship, the religious Habitude of Man to God, giving himself entire, outward and inward, to his Service and Obedience; for this is no other but to own him, and him only for that *Deity*, to whom all Love, and Worship, and Praise is due.

'Tis sure not so convenient to restrain this Precept to inward Worship only, for each Precept binds the whole Man to Obedience; and therefore I would not give the first Motions of Concupiscence in general, for the Sense of the tenth Commandment, as we shall show when we come to speak of that. Certainly even outward Worship given to a false God, breaks this first Commandment.

The Scope then is briefly, That the only true God be alone acknowledged for what he is, and (as we are able with all our Powers and Parts inwardly and outwardly) that he be answerably adored; that we neither change him for any other, nor join any other with him, nor be neglective and slack in honouring and obeying him: So that as we are particularly by each several Precept instructed in, and obliged to the particular Duties of it, by this we are generally tied to give Obedience to them all. 'Tis no way inconvenient, but most fit in this general Notion, that this first Commandment import the Observance of itself, and of all the rest.

II. The Sense of the Words, *Non habebis*, Heb. *Non erunt tibi*, &c.

1. *Erit tibi Deus*, *Thou shalt have a God*. Know and believe that there is a *Deity*.
2. Seek to know which is the true God, that thou may'st acknowledge him.
3. "Know me as I have revealed myself in my Word; know and believe that I *Jebo-vah*, the Author and Deliverer of this *Law*, that I am God; and there is none else, *Isa. xlv. 8.*"
4. "Offer not therefore either to forsake me, or to join

"join any other with me; alienate no part of my
 "Due from me, for my Glory I will not give unto
 "another." g. "Take me for thy God; and give
 "Service, and Honour, and thyself unto me."

Before my Face.] "Set them not up in my Sight,
 "for I cannot suffer them, nor their Worshipers;
 "if they come in my Sight they will provoke me to
 "Anger." The Word here for *Face*, sometimes
 signifies Anger in Scripture; and it seems to allude
 to his clear Manifestation of himself to his People in
 the Delivery of the *Law*, and further to clear the
 Doctrine of pure and true Religion shining in the
Law, which is, as it were, the Light of the Face of
 God: In which Regard, the Nations that knew him
 not, may be said not to have their Gods before his
 Face; for though he see them, they saw not him.
 Again, *before my Face*, "If thine Idolatry be never
 "so secret, though it were but in Heart, remember
 "that it will be in my Sight; thou canst not steal a-
 "way any of my Glory to bestow any where else, so
 "cunningly and secretly, but I shall espy thee. If
 "thou canst have any other Gods that I cannot know
 "of, and see not, thou mayest; but if thou canst
 "have none but I shall see them, then beware, for if
 "I see it, I will punish it."

What it forbids. III. Breaches or Sins against this Com-
 mandment.

We cannot particularly name all, but some main
 ones.

1. That *inbred Enmity*, that habitual Rebellion
 that is in our Natures against God; συμφύνης ἐχθρα,
 that *connatural Enemy*, that takes Life with us as soon
 as ourselves in the Womb. τὸ φύνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, *the*
*mind of the Flesh**; and the Evidence of that,
 καὶ ὑποτάσσεται. *It cannot be ordered*, is ever breaking
 Rank. Some even of those that bestow mourning
 upon Sin, yet do not often enough consider the bit-
 ter Fountain, and bewail it. The wisest way to know
 Things, is following them home to their Causes.

A a

Thus

* Rom. viii. 6.

Thus David, Psal. li. 5. *Behold I was shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin hath my Mother conceived me.*

2. *Atheism.* Though there is in the Consciences of all Men an indelible Conviction of a Deity, so that there have been few of those Monsters found profess *Atheists*; yet there is in us all naturally this of *Atheism*, that by Nature we would willingly be rid of that Light, and quench that Sparkle if we could: And all ungodly Men do live contrary to it, and fight against it.

3. *The gross Idolatry of the Heathens*; their *πολυθεοις*, making Gods of Beasts, almost of every thing, and Beasts of themselves, *Nullus enim terminus in falso.* The Writers of the primitive Church have mightily and learnedly confuted them: But we will not stir this Dunghill. The Scripture calls Idols so; *Hillulim.*

4. *Witchcraft, Necromancy and Magical Arts*, that make a God of the Devil.

5. *Rome's Invocation of Saints and Angels*; tho' they take never so much Pains to clear it, they do but wash the Blot more. Thus in the same Matter, Jer. ii. 22. *Though thou take thee Nitre and much Soap, yet thine Iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord.* All their Apologies take it not away, let them refine it never so much with Pamphlets and Distinctions; all they attain by spinning it so fine, is but to make it a part of the Mystery of Iniquity.

6. *Erroneous Opinions concerning God*, and generally Heresies in Religion.

7. *Practical or interpretative Atheism*, or *Idolatry*, whether of the two you will call it; for it is both in the Lives of the most: And the World is full of this, being such as declares they have no God, or that this God is but some base Idol in his Stead; particularly amongst ourselves, 1. *Gross Ignorance of God*, and no Endeavour to attain the Knowledge of him, tho' in the midst of the Light and Means of knowing. 2. *Universal Profaneness* flowing from this Ignorance, *Hof. iv. 1, 2, 3.* The Hearts of Men that

that should be the Temples of God, are full of Idols; tho' we hide them in the closest corners, they are before his Face, he sees them, *vid. Ezek. viii.* Lust, and Pride, and Covetousness. Consider, That which you bestow most Thoughts and Service on, that which you are most affectionate and earnest in, is not that your God? And is there not something beside the true God that is thus deep in the Hearts of the most of us? Take pains to make the Comparison, look upon the Temper of your Minds; (to say nothing of much more Time spent upon other Things than on him :) How ardent you are in other Affairs that you think concern you near, and how cold in serving and honouring him? But tho' in particular Under-gods, in what serves their Honour, they differ, all Men naturally agree in the great Idol, *Himself*. Every Man is by corrupt Nature his own God. Was not this the first Wickedness that corrupted our Nature? *Ye shall be as Gods*; and it sticks to it still. Men would please themselves, and have themselves Somebody, esteem'd and honour'd; and would have all serve to this End. Is not this God's Right and Due they give themselves, to be the End of all their own Actions, and sacrifice all to their own Glory?

IV. *What it commands.*

Now by these we may easily gather the contrary, what is the Obedience of this Commandment.

Observation. Though the Graces are Duties properly belonging to this Commandment, some Divines think fit to expatiate into the several common Places of them, in explaining this Commandment: Yet, with all Respect to them, I think it not so fit to dwell upon each of these herein; their full handling rather belonging to that Place of Divinity that treats of the Head of Sanctification, and those infused Habits of which it consists.

So to know the true God, this *Jehovah*, as to be persuaded sovereignly to love, and fear, and trust in him, to serve and adore him.

He is to be feared, for he is great: *Who would not fear thee, thou King of Nations!* To be loved, for he is good; and because both great and good, only fit to be wholly relied on and hoped in.

But Love is all, it gives up the Heart, and by that all the rest to the Party loved; it is no more its own. Oh that we could love him! Did we see him, we would. It is his uncreated Beauty that holds glorified Spirits still beholding and still delighted; but we, because we know him not, if we have any Thoughts of him, how short are they? presently down again, fall to the Earth, and into the Mire e're we are aware. Therefore,

Set yourselves to know, and love, and worship this God; labour that there may be less of the World, and less of yourselves, and more of God in your Hearts; more settled and fixed Thoughts of him, and Delight in him. Think not that this is only for the Learned, or only for some retired contemplative Spirits that have nothing else to do; he is the *most High*, and Service and Honour is due to him from all his Creatures; and from his reasonable Creatures, reasonable Service: And what this is, hear from the Apostle, and let his Exhortation, or his Entreaty, persuade you to it, *I beseech you therefore, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that you present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, (and they are not living without the Soul) holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable Service, Rom. xii. 1. and your truest Obedience to this Commandment.*

P R E C E P T II.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven Image.

The first Commandment binds us to acknowledge and worship the true God; this, to the true Worship of that God.

As

As God is not known but by his own teaching and revealing himself, so he cannot be rightly worshipped but by his own Prescription and Appointment.

This is the Aim of this second Commandment, to bind up Man's Hands, and his working Fancy that sets his Hands at Work, and to teach him to depend upon divine Direction for the Rule of divine Worship, and to offer him nothing in his Service, but what he hath received from him in command. The Prohibition is general; *Non facies tibi*, thou shalt not devise any thing to thyself in the Worship of God: And, under that gross Device of Images, and worshipping them, expressly named, are comprehended all other Inventions and Will-worship.

There is in the Words, 1. The Precept. 2. The Enforcement of it.

Precept. 1. *Thou shalt not make*, Thou shalt not imagine, nor invent, nor imitate the Invention of others. Thou shalt not make, nor cause to make: In a Word, Thou shalt be no way accessory to the corrupting of divine Worship, with any *Resemblance*, or Image, or *human Device* at all.

The former a particular Word, signifying the then most usual kind of Imagery; but the other of a most large and general Sense, for all kind of Similitude and Representation. So that the Dispute the Church of Rome drives us into for her Interest in this Matter, about *ειδωλον* and *εικων*, is not only a mere *Logomachy*, a Debate about Words, but altogether impertinent and extravagant, having no Ground at all in the Words of the Commandment; the former whereof is more particular than either of these two, and the latter more general and comprehensive than either they or any one Word we have to render it by.

Of the things which are in Heaven, &c.] Because the vain Mind of Man had wandered up and down the World, and gone through all the Places to find Objects of Idolatry: In Heaven, the Sun, and Moon, and Stars; on the Earth not only Men, but Beasts and creeping things, and Fishes in the Waters, and

made Images of them to worship; the Lord is therefore particular in his Countermand.

2. The second Part of the Precept is concerning their Worship, *Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them.*

The former Word is more particular, specifying one usual Sign of Worship, the inclining or bowing of the Body. The other general: *Thou shalt not serve them*, i. e. give them no Kind nor Part of religious Worship at all, on whatsoever Pretence.

Here again the Popish Writers make a Noise with that Distinction, under which they think to shift the Censure of Idolatry: Call it what they will, λατρεύειν, or δαλύνειν, sure it comes under the Word in the Original, which signifies religious Service or Worship. Neither can they ever find in all the Scriptures, that any thing of that Kind should be bestowed lower than upon the Majesty of God himself.

This is then the Tenor of the Commandment, 1. That no Image or Representation of God be made at all, as is exprest in many other Scriptures, as giving the Sense of this Precept. 2. Nor that any Resemblance of any Creature be made for a religious Use. 3. That neither to any Creature, nor to any Resemblance or Image be given any Part of divine Worship, although it were with a Pretence, yea, and Intention of worshipping the true God in and by them; which if it were a sufficient Excuse, as the Church of *Rome* dreams it is, certainly the *Israelites* golden Calf, and many other the grossest Idols have been in the World, might come and find room to shelter under it.

For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.] This follows the other Part, the binding on, or enforcing of the Precept by Threatning and Promise annexed. Particularly, there be these five things, by which God describes himself here, to persuade Obedience to this Command. 1. His Relation to his People, *Thy God*. 2. His Power both to punish and reward. *El. The strong God*. 3. The exact Regard he hath

to his own Glory and Zeal, or Jealousy for it. *A jealous God.* 4. The Certainty and Severity of his Justice, punishing the Transgressors of this his Law, on themselves and their Posterity, *Visiting, &c.* 5. The Plenty and Riches of his Goodness to the Obedient, *Shewing Mercy, &c.*

This Commandment, and the fourth, are longer than the rest, and more backed with Argument, because the Light of Nature discerns less in these than in the rest. The outward Manner of the Worship of God, and God's Exactness in that, to be served not as we will, but as he himself sees fit, and concerning the time of it.

Of the first Argument from God's Relation to his People before in the Preface, here it is repeated, because it suits with the Word that follows, *Jealous.*

1. *Thy God*; Thy Husband by particular Covenant, and therefore jealous of thy Love and Fidelity to me in my Worship, 2. *El.* able to right myself upon the mightiest and proudest Offender. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy,* (says the Apostle) *are we stronger than he?* 1. Cor. x. There joining these two together (as here they are) his *Strength* and his *Jealousy*. 3. *Jealous*, He is the Lord and Husband of his People, and Idolatry is therefore spiritual Adultery; as they are often reproached with it under that Name by the Prophets, *Jer. iii. 1, &c.* So that by that Sin particularly his Anger is stirred up against them. The very Contract of this Marriage with his People we have, *Exod. xix. 5.* 4. *Visiting*, As Judges and Magistrates use to visit those Places that are under their Jurisdiction, to make Enquiry after Abuses committed in time of their Absence, and to punish them, 1. *Sam. vii. 16.* Thus he that is always every where alike present, yet because he doth not speedily punish every Sin at the first, therefore when he doth execute Judgment in his appointed time, then is he said to visit and search, and find out that Iniquity, which in his time of Forbearance, he seemed to the Ungodly either not to see, or not to regard.

Of the Fathers.] It is true, the Prophet correcting the perverse Speech of the People of his time, affirms, *That the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, &c. Ezek. xviii.* to wit, he repenting and returning, and being no way culpable of the like Iniquity, which the People then falsely presumed of themselves: But neither is it here said, that the godly Children shall suffer for the Sin of their ungodly Parents or Ancestors; but because this Sin of Idolatry or false Worship in any kind, doth as commonly and readily descend to Posterity, as any other, and there is scarce any Plea for false Religion that takes more, *It was the Religion of our Forefathers;* this kind of Threatning may possibly for that Cause be here particularly suitable.

But sure that is not all that is here intended, that, if the Children do continue in the Sin of the Parents, they shall be punished; but that for so high a Transgression as this, he may justly, and often doth in Judgment give the Children over to the Sins of their Parents; his Grace being free, and so not being bound to his Creature to furnish Grace, but where he will, they go on in the Sin of their Fathers, and bring upon themselves further Punishment, not only temporal, but spiritual and eternal. It is not necessary for its verifying that it be always so; for God, we know, hath converted many Children of ungodly, yea, particularly of idolatrous Parents, and shewed them Mercy: But in that he justly may do thus, it is a just threatening: and in that he often doth thus, it is a true threatening, although in Mercy he deal otherwise where it pleaseth him.

That hate me.] What! this is so harsh a Word, that no Body will own it. Not the most Dissolute and Wicked, not the grossest Idolaters. Yet generally the Love of Sin witnesses against Men possess with it, that they are, *Σεσυγείς*, Haters of God; and particularly the Love of Idols and false Worship, alienates the Soul from God, and turns it to Enmity against him. Men seem possibly to themselves in false

Worship

Worship humble and devout, *Col. ii. 18.* but it is to hate and dishonour the divine Majesty, to bring to him and force upon him, as it were, in his own Presence, in his immediate Service, that which is most hateful to him.

Shewing Mercy to Thousands,] “ Blessing them and their Posterity, being their God, and the God of their Seed.”

That love and keep, &c.] “ That therefore obey me, because they love me, and testify they love me by obeying me.” This is a general Truth in regard of all the Commandments, though more particularly to be applied to this, to which it is annexed. It forbids,

1. Making any Image or Resemblance of God at all, *Deut. iv. 15.* *Ye saw no manner* *What it forbids.*
of Similitude, &c. *To whom will ye liken me?*
Isa. xl. &c.

2. The giving any kind of religious Honour and Worship to any Creature or created Resemblance, *Job xxxi. 27. Psal. cxv.* The Reason why Men are so propense to both these, is, because they are so much addicted to Sense, and their Minds are so blinded, that they cannot conceive of the spiritual Nature of God. Therefore being driven by Conscience to some kind of Worship and Religion, they incline to have some visible Object of it; the Soul having lost its Sight, leans upon the Body, would make it up, and supply it by the Eye of Sense.

3. All Superstition and Will-worship, all self-pleasing Ceremonies and Inventions in the Service of God, how pompous and plausible and devout soever they seem to be, instead of decorating, *And this third springs from the same Root too.*
they do indeed deface the native Beauty of Divine Worship; and as Popish Pictures on Glass Windows, they may seem rich and gay, but they darken the House; they keep out the Light of saving Truth, and obscure the spiritual Part of the Service of God.

All

4. All gross material Conceits and Apprehensions of God. Other Particulars may be reduced to the Command; for this and the rest name but the main Offences and Duties. Then it commands,

1. To learn, and carefully and punctually to observe the Prescription of God in every Part of his own Worship, and diligently to be exercised in it, as in Hearing, Prayer, Sacraments, &c.

2. In worshipping him to have the purest spiritual Notion of his Majesty that we are able to attain to. *Obs.* God deals by both, by representing his Justice and his Mercy to persuade his People to

Obedience, to drive them by Fear of the one, and draw them by the Sweetness of the other. The Pastors are to set both before their People; but as he delights most in the pressing of his Mercy, and persuading by that; so certainly 'tis that, that prevails most with his own Children, and doth most kindly melt and mould their Hearts to his Obedience.

Observe the Difference. *Visit Iniquity to Thirds and Fourths but shew Mercy to Thousands that keep my Commandments.]* Although it be not

perfect, yet it is such a keeping as flows from Love and therefore Love makes up what is wanting in it and that is not perfect neither in us here, and therefore Mercy makes up what is wanting in both. It is not such Love and Obedience as can plead for Reward upon Merit, but such as stands in need of Mercy, and it is free Grace and Mercy that rewards it.

Love and keep.] These two are inseparable. No keeping the Commandments without Love, no Love without keeping them. Try then the one by the other, the Sincerity of your Obedience by examining the Spring of it, if it arise from Love; and try the Reality of your Love, if it be active and fruitful in Obedience.

You know how studious Love is to please, how observant of their Will whom it affects, preferring it to their own Will, and desirous to have no Will but the same; makes hard things easy, and cannot endure

endure to have any thing called difficult to it: Much Love to God would do this, it would turn all Duty into Delight. Did we once know what this were, we would say with St. *Austin*, *What needs Threatening and Punishment to those that love thee not, is it not Punishment enough not to love thee?* If you would have all your Obedience sweet and easy to yourselves, and acceptable to God, seek above all things Hearts inflamed with his Love.

P R E C E P T III.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, &c.

The Psalmist stirring up himself to the Praises of God, *Psal.* lvii. 8. calls up his Glory to it, *Awake my Glory.* By *Glory* the *Hebrew* Interpreters understand the *Soul*; the *Septuagint* and others the *Tongue*: So the Apostle, following the *Septuagint*, renders it, from *Psal.* xv. *Acts* ii.

It suits well with both: The *Soul* being the better Part of Man, far excelling the *Body*; and amongst the Parts of the *Body* the *Tongue* having this Excellency, to be the Organ of Speech, and so the Interpreter of the *Mind*: And this Difference from the *Beasts*, as the *Soul* is, may well partake of its honourable Name, and be called *Man's Glory*.

But that which gives them both best Title to that Name, is that Exercise to which he calls them, the praising and glorifying of their Lord and Maker. Then are they indeed our *Glory*, when they are so taken up and employed, when the one conceives, and the other utters his *Glory*.

And as it becomes them always to be one, as they have one Name, the *Soul* and the *Tongue* to agree, so especially should this one Name given them be answered by their Harmony and Agreement in his own Work, for which chiefly they have that Name,
in

in giving Glory to God; and it is that which this Commandment requires: Forbidding that which is the Ignominy of Man, both of his Soul and of his Tongue, and degrades them, turns them out of the Name of *Glory*, to be called *Shame* and *Dishonour*, that is, Irreverence, and dishonouring the glorious Name of GOD: And therefore, on the contrary, commanding the reverent and holy Use of his Name and Service; and that we always endeavour so to speak and think of him, and so to walk before him, as those that seek beyond all things that his Name may be glorified in us and by us. For though false Swearing and vain Swearing are main Breaches of this Commandment, (as we shall shew afterwards) being primely forbidden by it, yet it extends generally to all our Speeches concerning God: Neither is it to be restrained there, and kept within that Compass, as if it gave only Law to the Tongue; although indeed the Tongue hath a very great Share in it, both in the breaking and keeping of it, yet certainly the Precept in its full Sense goes deeper into the Soul, and gives a Rule to the Speech of the Mind, our Thoughts concerning God; and larger, stretches itself forth to our Actions and Life, that hath as loud a Voice to those with whom we converse as our Tongues, and is the more considerable of the two, giving a truer Character of Men, what they are indeed, than their Words can do.

The first Commandment teaches and enjoins whom we shall worship. The second, what Worship we shall give him. This third shews us with what Disposition and Intention, and answerably with what manner of Expression we shall worship him, and use his Name, that it be not vainly, and after a common trivial Manner, but in Holiness and Humility, and Desire of his Glory.

So then this Commandment concerns particularly that which is the great End of all the Works of God, *The Glory of his Name*. He made all Things for himself, *Prov. xvi.* his Works of Creation for this End,

Isa.

Iſa. xliii. 7. of Redemption and new Creation of the elect World, *Eph.* i. *All to his Praise and Glory*: And for this End calls he us from Darkness to Light, to shew forth his Praises or Virtues, *1 Pet.* ii. 9. This we are to intend with him, and that this Precept requires of us, that what he aim'd at in all his Works, the same we may intend in all ours: And this is an excellent thing, the holiest and happiest Condition, to make God's Purpose ours, and have the same End with him. Here it is particularly true, *Summa religionis est imitari quem colis*, *The Main of Religion is to imitate him whom we worship*. Thus are we to live, and particularly so to worship him and make Mention of his Name; that we be ever sensible of its Worth and Greatness, and so beware that we indignify it not, but always seek to advance the Honour and Glory of it; and that is the very Scope of this Commandment.

There is in it, 1. The *Precept* itself. 2. The *annexed Commination*.

In the *Precept*, 1. What his Name. *The Meaning of the Words.*
2. To take it. 3. What in vain.

The Name.] 1. The Names that are given him in Scripture, *Jehovah*, *Elohim*, &c. It was a foolish and profane Shift of the *Jews*, that thought themselves free, if they abused not the Name *Jehovah*: And so they became superstitious in the forbearing that, and licentious in the Abuse of the rest; and swearing by other things in Heaven and Earth, &c. Which therefore our Saviour reproveth, giving the true Sense of this Commandment, *Matth.* v. And this is the Nature of Superstition, to make frivolous undue Restraints, by way of Compensation of that profane Liberty and Looseness in the Commandments of God, which is its usual Companion. 2. All the Attributes of God, by which the holy Scriptures set him forth to us. 3. Generally any thing whatsoever by which God is made known unto us, and distinguished from all others, and by which we make mention of him, which are the Uses of a Name. In a Word,

Word, that of St. Paul expresseth it fully and fidly
 Τὸ γινώσκον τὸ Θεόν.

Thou shalt not take,] that is, Thou shalt not take
 or lift up, or bear. 1. Not use it secretly by thy
 self, or within thyself, in thine own Thoughts, with
 out Reverence; nor take it in vain. So, 2. No
 make mention of it, or express it to others vainly
 not lift it up in vain. 3. Not bear, not be called by
 it, or have it called upon thee; not profess it in
 vain.

In vain.] 1. Falsely and dissimulately. 2. Pro-
 fanely. 3. Unprofitably, to no Purpose. 4. Lightly
 and inconsiderately, without due Regard, and holy
 Fear.

2. The annexed Commination.

He will not bold him guiltless.] “ He will not clear
 “ him. The sovereign Judge, from whose Hand no
 “ Offender can escape, except he willingly set him-
 “ self free and absolve him, he will not absolve them
 “ that abuse his Name.” And it means further, he
 will not clear him, that is, he will certainly punish
 him, and do Judgment on him as guilty. And this
 is the rather particularly here exprest, because Men
 are subject foolishly to promise themselves Impunity
 in this Sin, think either there remains no Guiltiness
 behind it, but it passes as the Words do; or if there
 be any, yet being but a Mutter of Words, wherein
 the most usual and known Breach of this Command-
 consists, that the Guiltiness of them is so small, that
 any little Excuse may wipe it off; that it is but In-
 advertence, or a bad Custom, or some such thing
 “ No, (says the Lord, the Law-giver himself) de-
 “ clude not yourselves, think not the Honour and
 “ Dishonour of my Name a light Matter; or if you
 “ will, yet I will not think it so, nor you shall not
 “ find it so; though you easily forgive and clear
 “ yourselves, I will not clear you, but will vindicate
 “ the Glory of my Name in your just Punish-
 “ ment, which your Sin of taking it in vain did a-
 “ buse and dishonour; and you shall feel in that
 “ Punishment

"Punishment that you are not guiltless, as you imagined." The Name of GOD is great and weighty and honourable, (as the same *Hebrew* Word signifies both) and therefore, *qui assumunt vel attollunt*, as the Word here is, they that offer to lift up this weighty Name lightly and regardlessly, it shall fall upon them, and they shall be crush'd under the Weight of it.

There are many Questions relating to this Commandment handled and discussed by Divines, as of an Oath, a Vow, &c. which, for our purposed Brevity, we will pass by; and only, according to our usual Method, add some chief Heads of the Violation and Observance of this Commandment.

1. All false Swearing or Perjury, which *It forbids,* is to take his Name after the grossest Manner in vain, or *in mendacium*, as the Word likewise signifies; to call Truth itself, the first Verity, to partake of a Lie. But he is not mocked, for as the Nature of an Oath imports invoking him as the highest both Witness and Judge of Truth, and Punisher of Falshood, he always in his own due time makes it good on those that dare adventure upon that Guiltiness in so high a kind.

2. *Papal* Dispensation of Oaths, which is a most heinous Sin, and becomes him that is eminently called *the Man of Sin*. It is more than Perjury, for it is a profest avowed Patrocinium of Perjury, together with an impudent Conceit of a Privilege and Right to do so.

3. Equivocatory Oaths, by which, if it were lawful, the grossest Perjury might be defended; for there is nothing so false, but some mental Reservation may make it true.

4. Abusing the Name and Word of God to Charms and Spells.

5. Execration and Cursing by the Name of Satan, which is no other but invoking him.

6. Swearing by any Creature.

7. Abusing and villifying the glorious and holy Name of God, by passionate, or by vain and common customary Swearing.

8. Swearing for Ends of Controversy, and in weighty Matters, where an Oath is lawful, yea necessary, yet doing it without due Reverence, and Consideration of the Greatness of God, and the Nature of an Oath.

9. Abusing of the Word of God, either wresting it to defence of Error, or making Sport and Jestings with it.

10. Scoffing and Taunting at Holiness, and the Exercises of Religion.

11. Dishonouring the Religion which we profess, by unworthy and unsuitable Carriage of Life.

12. Performing Prayer, or any other religious Exercise, only out of Custom, without Affection and Delight, and holy Regard of the Presence and Majesty of God in his Worship. More might be added, which for Brevity we omit.

Inference. Is it not the highest Shame of Christians to take Pleasure to vilify and abuse that holy Name of God, that Saints and Angels are blessing above, and which we hope (as we pretend) to bless with them for ever? If any dare offer to excuse it, by Provocation or Passion, that otherwise use it not; consider what a Madness this is, because Man hath injured thee, thou wilt injure God, and be avenged upon his Name for it. And you that plead Custom, accuse yourselves more deeply; that tells you are guilty of long Continuance in, and frequent Commission of this horrible Sin. Were the Fear of God in Men's Hearts, it would prevail both above their Passion and their Custom. Did they believe this, that the Lord will not clear in his great Day, it would fright them out of their Custom. Were there a Law made, that whosoever were heard swear should be put to Death, you would find a Way to break your Custom: God threatens eternal Death, and you fear not, because indeed you believe not.

Generally,

Generally, the reverent and holy Use of the Name of God: And particularly, *It commands,*

1. In case of Necessity, by advised and religious Swearing by his Name, and his alone, in Judgment, Truth and Righteousness. 2. Consider his Name often, to take it into our Thoughts, to meditate on his glorious Attributes, and on his Word and Works, in both which those Attributes shine forth unto us. 3. To delight to make mention of his Name upon all fit Occasions, and to speak to his Glory. 4. To adorn our holy Profession of Religion with a holy Life, with wise and circumspect walking, that it may not be evil spoken of by our Means. 5. That our Heart and Affection be in the Service of God which we perform, otherwise (how plausible soever the Appearance and Outside of it is) it is nothing but Guiltiness within, a taking of his Name in vain, who will not hold them guiltless that do so. 6. Above all Exercises, to delight in the Praises of God, which is most properly the exalting and magnifying of his Name, the lifting it up on high. The Psalmist abounds in commending it; it is good, it is comely, it is pleasant: Oh! that we could resolve with him, *Psal. xxxiv. 1, 2. I will bless the Lord at all times; his Praise shall be in my Mouth continually: My Soul shall make her boast in the Lord, &c.* This is, as we can, to bear a Part here with glorified Spirits; and a certain Privilege to us, that after a few Days we shall be admitted into their Number.

P R E C E P T I V.

Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day, &c.

Amongst all the visible Creatures, it is Man's peculiar Excellency, that he is capable of considering and worshipping his Maker, and was made for that Purpose; yet being composed of the Dust of the Earth, and the Breath of God, a Body and a Soul *, the Necessities of that meaner Part, while we are in this Life, employ as much, and take up a great Part of our little time. And in this Regard God hath wisely

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and

* Πνεῦς καὶ Χρῆς. Naz.

and graciously set apart a Day for us, one of each seven to be appropriate to that our highest Employment, the contemplating and solemn worshipping of his Majesty. This the Scope of this Precept,

Division. 1. The Precept itself. 2. The Reason of it, and Motive to its Obedience. The Precept itself is first briefly exprest. 2. Further explained and urged.

The Words. Remember.] This Word used, 1. It seems to reflect upon by-past Omission and Forgetfulness, for though it was instituted in Paradise, and was not now a new unheard of thing to this People, as appears by *Exod. xvi. 23*, yet it is like they were much worn out of the Observation and Practice of it, especially during the time of their Captivity in *Egypt*. So then it is renewed thus, "Keep holy this Day" which you know was so long ago appointed to be "so, be not now any more unmindful and regardless of it." 2. Such a Way of enjoining seems more particularly needful in this than in the rest, because it is not so written in Nature as the rest, but depends wholly upon particular Institution, which may also be the Cause why it is so large, and the Form of it alone amongst all the ten, both negative and positive, *Tbou shalt do no Work*, and, *remember to keep it holy*. 3. But the main Reason of this, *Remember*, is, the main Thing or Aim in this Precept, as both the Badge, and the Preserver and Increaser of all Piety and Religion. And therefore is it, that it is so often prest in the Books of the Law, and Sermons of the Prophets to the People of God, and so often called a Sign of God's Covenant with them, and their Mark of Distinction from all other People *.

The Sabbath-day.] It is called a Day of Rest, from the Beginning and Original of its Institution, God's Rest; and from the End of its Institution, Man's Rest; both which follow in the Words of the Command: The one is the Example and enforcing Reason of the other. *That*

* *Exod. xxiii. 12* and *xxxi. 13, 14. Levit. xix. 30. 25. 2. &c. Jerem. xvii. Isai. lviii. 13, 14, &c.*

That thou keep holy.] God sanctified it by instituting it, and Man sanctified it by observing it according to that Institution.

This sanctifying is, 1. In Cessation from earthly Labour. 2. In their Stead to be wholly posselt and taken up with spiritual Exercise, both in private and in publick. The former is necessary for the being of the latter, that Cessation for this Work; and the latter is necessary for the due being of the former; we cannot be vacant and entire for spiritual Service, unless we cease from bodily Labour, and this Cessation or resting from bodily Labour, cannot be a sanctifying of this Day unto God, unless it be accompanied with spiritual Exercise.

In the following Words, that Part is only exprest, the Rest or Abstinency from Work; but the other is supposed as the End of this, that they shall not do their own Works, that they may attend upon God's, his solemn Worship. And that is implied in that Word, *It is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*, both of his own appointing, and for this end this Work, that he may be more solemnly worshipped. And likewise the *Antithesis* that seems to be in that Word, *In six Days thou shalt do all thy Work*, imports, that on the seventh thou shalt do God's: Not so called, that any Benefit arises to him by our Service; no, *Our Goodness reaches him not at all*. That Way, that Worship that is far above ours, that of the Angels, can add nothing to him, for he is infinite. Even this Work, Sabbath's Work, and all our Prayers and Praises offered to him, and all Performances of his Worship, they are our Works in respect of the Gain and Advantage of them, it comes all back to us. But his Worship is his Work objectively, he is the Object of it, and directively by particular Prescription from himself; and, if you will add effectively too, never done aright but by his own Grace and Assistance.

Six Days shalt thou labour, &c.] The Command of due Labour and Diligence in our particular Callings, is not of this Place, it belongs properly to the eighth

Precept, and some way to the seventh; here it is only mentioned premissively, and for Illustration of this Duty here enjoined. And further, there is under it a Motive from abundant Equity, seeing God hath made the Proportion thus, not pinched to us but dealt very liberally in the time granted for our own Work; what gross, not Impiety only, but Iniquity and Ingratitude will it be, to encroach upon that small Part he hath nominated and set apart for his Service? This was a great Aggravation of our first Parents first Sin, that having the free Use of all the Trees in the Garden besides, they would not bate that one that was forbidden them, in Homage and Obedience to him that had given them all the rest, and given them themselves, who a little before were nothing. [*Thou shalt labour.*] Not so as in them to forget and take no Notice of God, not at all to call upon him and worship him, and think to acquit all by some kind of Attendance on him on the Sabbath. They that do so are most unsanctified themselves, and therefore cannot sanctify the Sabbath to God. Such profane Persons do profane and pollute all they touch with their foul Hands, for such be all profane Hands lift up to God in Prayer. The Life of the Godly is not a visiting of God only in his House on this Day, but a daily and constant walking with God in our own Houses, and in all our Ways, making both our Houses and our Hearts, his Houses, his Temples, where he may dwell with us, and we may offer him our daily Sacrifices.

Only the peculiar of this Day is, that we may not divide it betwixt Heaven and Earth, but it shall be wholly for the Service of God, and no Work at all to have Place in it that may hinder that, and suits not with the sanctifying of it; for so we are to understand the Word, *No manner of Work.*

Neither thou nor thy Servant, &c.] As each one is obliged personally, so they that have Command of others, are bound to bind them to Observance, and the Cattle to Rest, because their Labour is for Man's

Use, and therefore his resting infers theirs; as likewise their rest is for a passive Conformity, that Man may see nothing round about him, but what may incite to the Observance of this Day; which was the Reason, in solemn Fasts, of the Beasts fasting likewise, for Man's further Humiliation. The *Stranger*, if converted and professing their Religion, the same Reason for him, as for all others within a Man's House; and if a Stranger to their Religion too, yet they might and ought, as here is commanded, oblige him to this Part of outward Conformity, Cessation from Work, which otherwise would be an offensive and scandalous Sight; and withal if they did any Work for those with whom they dwell, their Share would be deeper in the Sin, than of such a Stranger, not professing their Religion.

For in six Days.] It is not pertinent here to speak of the Reason of this, why God made six Days Work of that, which he could have done in one Instant; here it is only urged exemplarily, as the Reason why God did sanctify this Day, and why we should sanctify it. His Rest you know is not of Weariness, or at all of ceasing from Motion; *For he faints not, neither is wearied*, as he tells us by the Prophet; yea, he moves not at all in working, *Omnia movet ipse immotus*. But this Rest is this, that this was the Day that immediately followed the perfecting of the Creation; and therefore God blest it with this Privilege, (that is the Blessing of it) that it should be to Men holy, for the Contemplation of God and of his Works, and for solemn Worship to be performed to him.

All the other Precepts of this Law remaining in full Force in their proper Sense, it cannot but be an Injury done to this Command, either flatly to refuse it that Privilege; or, which is little better, to evaporate it into Allegories. Nor was the Day abolished as a typical Ceremony, but that seventh only changed to a seventh still, and the very next to it: He that is Lord of the Sabbath, either himself immediately,

diately, or by his Authority in his Apostles, appointing that Day of his Resurrection for our Sabbath, adding to the Remembrance of the first Creation, the Memorial of accomplishing the new Creation, the Work of our Redemption, which appeared then manifestly to be perfected, when our Redeemer broke the Chains of Death, and arose from the Grave, he that is the Light of the new World, shining forth a-new the same Day that Light was made in the former Creation. This Day was St. *John* in the Spirit taken up with those extraordinary Revelations, *Apoc.* i. 10. They were extraordinary indeed; and certainly every Christian ought to be in the Spirit in holy Meditations and Exercises on this Day more than the rest, winding up his Soul, that the Body poises downwards, to a higher Degree of Heavenliness, to be particularly careful to bring a humble Heart to speak to God in Prayer, and hear him in his Word; a Heart breathing after him, longing to meet with himself in his Ordinances. And certainly it is safer and sweeter to be thus affected towards the Lord's Day, than to be much busied about the Debate of the Change.

The very Life of Religion doth much depend upon the solemn Observation of this Day: Consider but, if we should intermit the keeping of it for one Year, to what a Height Profaneness would rise in those that fear not God, which yet are restrained (though not converted) by the preaching of the Word, and their outward partaking of publick Worship: yea, those that are most spiritual, would find themselves Losers by the Intermision.

What forbidden. 1. Bodily Labour on this Day, where Necessity unavoidable, or Piety commands not. 2. Sporting and Pastimes*. This is not to make it a Sabbath to God, but to our Lusts, and to Satan; and hath a stronger Antipathy with the Worship of God, and that Temper of Mind they intend in it, than the hardest Labour. 3. Rest-

* *Sabb. vituli aurei.*

ing from these, but withal, resting from the proper Work of this Day, neglecting the Worship of God in the Assemblies of his People; the Beasts can keep it thus, as we see in the Precept. 4. Resorting to the publick Worship of God, but in a customary cold way, without Affection and spiritual Delight in it. 5. Spending the Remainder of the Day incongruously, in vain Visits and Discourses, &c.

1. By pious Remembrance of it, and Preparation, sequestering not only the Body from the Labour, but our Souls from the Cares and other vain Thoughts of the World. 2. Attending upon the publick Worship of God willingly and heartily, as the Joy and Refreshment of our Souls, *Isa. lviii. Psal. cxxii.* 3. Spending the Remainder of it in private holily, as much as may be, in Meditation of the Word preached, and Conference, in Prayer, reading, and meditating on the great Works of God, of Creation, Redemption, &c.

This is the loveliest brightest Day in all the Week to a spiritual Mind; these Rests refresh the Soul in God, that finds nothing but Turmoil in the Creature. Should not this Day be welcome to the Soul, that sets it free to mind its own Business, which is on other Days to attend the Business of its Servant, the Body? And these are a certain Pledge to it of that expected Freedom, when it shall enter to an eternal Sabbath and Rest in him for ever, who is the only Rest of the Soul.

P R E C E P T V.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

The renewed Image of God in Man, or the new Man, is made up of Holiness and Righteousness, *Eph. iv. 24.* These two are that of which the whole Law of God is the Rule: The first Table, the Rule

of Holiness or Piety towards God: The second, of Righteousness or Equity towards Men. And of the Commandments that concern this, the first aims at the preserving of that Order which God hath appointed in the several Relations of Superiors and Inferiors; that is the Scope of this fifth Commandment.

Daily Experience teacheth us how needful this is, that God give a particular Precept concerning this; in that we see how few there are that know aright, either how to command and bear Rule as Superiors, or as Inferiors to obey and be subject: And there is one Evil very natural to Men that misleads them in both, Pride and Self-opinion, which often makes Superiors affect Excess in commanding, and Inferiors defective in due Obedience.

Order. It hath the first Place in the second Table.

1. As being the Rule of Order and Society amongst Men, which is needful for the better observing of all the rest; and in all Authority there is a particular Resemblance of God, and therefore fitly placed next to those Precepts that contain our Duty to himself. He is pleased to use that Interchange of Names with Superiors that testifies this Resemblance, not only to take theirs to himself, to be called a *Father*, a *Master*, or *King*, &c. but to communicate his own Name to them, and call them *Gods*. And where the Apostle speaks of God as the *Father of Spirits*, he draws a Reason from that Obedience we owe to the Fathers of our Flesh, as the subordinate Causes of our Being *.

Division. 1. The *Precept*. 2. The *Promise*. And it is called by the Apostle, *the first Commandment with Promise*. For the last Clause of the second Commandment, though it imply a Promise, yet (as is usually observed) it is general to the keeping of all the Commandments; whereas this is appropriate. But again, it is a Promise of a Mercy in general, this of one particular Blessing. 3. 'Tis not formally a Promise, though it implies one indeed, and

* Πρώτα Θεὸν τίμα μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ τοῖς γονεῦσι. Phocill.

and is intended so; but it is set down by way of Description of God, from his Mercy and Bounty to those that keep his Precepts; as the Clause foregoing it, expresses his Justice in punishing the rebellious.

Honour.] Under this is comprehended whatsoever is due to Superiors, by virtue of that their Station and Relation to us; inward respective Thoughts and Esteem of them, and outward Expression, and signifying of it by the usual Signs of Honour, and by Obedience and Gratitude, &c.

*The Meaning
of the Words.*

Thy Father, &c.] This Relation is named for all the rest, as being the first and most natural. 2. The sweetest and most affectionate Superiority; and therefore the fittest to regulate the Command of Superiors, and to persuade Inferiors to Obedience. Magistrates are Fathers for Mens civil Good in their Societies, and dwelling together; Ministers, Fathers for their spiritual Good and Society as Christians.

That thy Days may be long, &c.] That it is said, *which the Lord thy God shall give thee*, is peculiar to that People to whom this Law was first delivered; but the Substance of the Promise being common, extends to all with the Precept.

This Blessing of Length of Days, is particularly fit for the Duty; that they who honour their Parents, who are the second Causes of their Life, shall be blest'd with long Life.

This, as all other Promises of temporal Things, is ever to be taken with that Condition, without which they might change their Quality, and prove rather Punishments; but God always bestows them on his own, and therefore ought to be understood so to promise them, in so far as they are fit for them, and may be truly good in their particular Enjoyment, and as they conduce to a greater Good.

1. All Disobedience in Inferiors to the just Commands of those that God hath placed in Authority above them: Stubbornness and Rebellion in Children against their Parents, or Despising

It forbids,

spising and Disesteem of them for their Meanness in Body, or Mind, or Estate. The Precept is not, "Honour thy Parents for their Riches, or Wisdom, or Comeliness;" but, "Honour them as thy Parents, and because they are so." Against this Command is all other Disobedience, or Refractoriness of those that owe Obedience; Wives to their Husbands, Servants to their Masters, People to their Pastors, &c.

2. Superiors break it, when they abuse their Authority to serve their Pride; their screwing it too high is very unpleasant, a particular Dishonour to God, and defaces the Resemblance they have of him; spoils their Harmony, as a String too high wound up: And besides that, it is very dangerous, being the ready Way to break it. As in Magistracy and publick Government, Tyranny is most observable, there is petty Tyranny in Masters and Parents, &c. in extream Harshness and Bitterness, &c. *μητις ὑπαίετε*, says the Apostle, &c. Again, when Superiors walk unworthily, and so divest themselves of that Honour which belongs to them.

It commands, First, That Children give due Respect and Obedience to their Parents; and all that are subject to the Authority of others, though they have not suitable Deserving, give it to their Station, in Obedience to God who commands; for though they, personally considered, do not, yet certainly God deserves our Obedience. And it is so much the purer to him, when other Incitements failing, yet we observe that which fails not at all. All Obedience to Men is limited thus, that it be in the Lord, and with regard to his Supremacy; and therefore no Authority can oblige to the Obedience of any Command that crosses his. Authority is primitively and originally in God, and he gives not his Glory to another; he gives not away any of his peculiar Authority to Man, but substitutes him: And our first Tye is to God, as his Creatures, and this is universal; the greatest Kings are his Vassals, and

owe

owe him Homage, and no Authority derived from him can free us from that which we owe to himself. There is a straight Line of Subordination, and if Superiors leave this, we are to adhere to it, looking directly to God, keeping our Station. Some of the Schoolmen think that the inferior Angels therefore fell with the Chief in their Apostacy, because they look'd so much upon him, that they considered him not in Subordination to God, and so left their Station, as the Apostle speaks.

Secondly, The Duty of all Superiors is, 1. To consider that their higher Station is not for themselves, and for their own Advantage, but for those that are in Subjection to them; as the Stars are set in the highest Place, but are for the Benefit of the inferior World, by their Light, and Heat, and Influence. *Let them be for Lights in the Firmament of Heaven, to give Light upon the Earth,* Gen. i. 15. 2. Let them always remember to command in God, and for him; to prefer his Honour to their own, seeing he gives Command concerning theirs, that they make it serviceable for the advancing of his; for to this Purpose hath he given them Authority, and given Command that they be honoured: And his Promise is to *honour those that honour him, but they that despise him shall be despised.* This many Superiors have felt, because they would not believe it, and take notice of it.

Would Parents teach their Children to know God, and honour and obey him, this were the surest and most effectual Way to make them obedient Children to them: If they teach them to obey God, you see he commands them to obey their Parents; and therefore in Obedience to him they will do so.

P R E C E P T VI.

Thou shalt not kill: Or, Thou shalt do no Murder.

The World was at first perfect Harmony, but Sin made the Breach at which Discord entred, Enmity betwixt

betwixt God and Man, and Enmity betwixt Man and Man. As the Sin that hath poisoned Man's Nature, makes him a Rebel to God, so it makes them Tygers and Wolves one to another: and that same Serpent that at first envenom'd our Nature, doth still hiss on wretched Man, both to Disobedience against God, and Enmity and Cruelty against one another. We see, how soon this Evil followed upon the former; the first Parents disobeyed God, and the first Children, the one killed the other. In Opposition to this Evil, God hath given this to be one of his ten Precepts, *Thou shalt not kill.*

Pre. 5. Having given a Rule touching the particular Relations of Men; the following Commandments of the second Table concern the general Duties of all Men one to another; and this sixth regardeth his Being or Life.

Not kill.] This ties not up the Sword of Justice, which is in the Magistrate's Hand, from punishing Offenders, even with Death those that deserve it; but rather calls for the Use of it, *not being to be carried in vain*, as the Apostle says; not a gilt Sword only for Shew, but to be drawn and wielded for the Execution of Justice; both that, in the just Punishment of Sin, *Κόλασις*, the Sinner may eat of the Fruit of his own Ways, and so God the supreme Judge and Fountain of Justice may be honoured, *Τιμωρία*, and that by that Example, *Παράδειγμα*, others may be terrified from the like Offences. And thus, just Killing by the Sword of the Magistrate, is a main Means of the observing this Commandment amongst Men, *Thou shalt not kill.*

By the like Reason is just War likewise freed from the Breach of this Commandment. But,

The Scope of the Precept being the Preservation and Safety of the Life of Man, and guarding it from Violence, it is evident that all Injury to our Neighbour's Life, our own not excluded, is *forbidden*. And not only the heinous Fault of Murther, which human Laws do punish, but all the Seeds and Beginnings

ginnings of this Sin in the Heart, to which principally, as the Fountain of our Actions, the spiritual Law of God is given, as the authentick Interpretation of our Saviour teacheth, *Matth. v.* and particularly touching this Commandment, *Ver. 21, &c.*

1. All fixed Hatred of our Brethren is forbidden, as the highest Degree of Heart-murther. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart, Levit. xix.* And 1 John iii. 15. *Whosoever hateth his Brother is a Murderer*; and he adds, that *ye know that no Murderer hath Life eternal abiding in him.* So then, he is in a woful deadly Condition in whose Heart this Hatred dwells.

This is an infernal Kind of Fire, like your Fires under Ground, that cannot be quenched; so far is it from the Temper of any truly spiritual and heavenly Mind to be subject to it. There is not any thing more contrary to the Spirit of God, and the Work of his Grace, than the Spirit of Malice, although it never break forth to Revenge; yet if the Heart rejoice when Evil befalls those it dislikes, although it come from another Hand, yet God accounts it, as if he, that is glad at it, had inflicted it, and been the Worker of it. Therefore *Job* protests thus, *That he rejoiced not at the Destruction of him that hated him, nor lift up his Soul when Evil found him, Job 31.29.*

2. Rash Anger, either that which is altogether without just Cause, or upon some just Cause arises to an undue Measure. And is not this the ordinary Disease of the greatest Part, an habitual Bitterness of Spirit, that is put out of its Seat, and troubled with every trifling Cause, peevishly stirred up with the Shadow and Imagination of a Wrong, where none is done?

3. The Vent of these Passions of Envy and Hatred, or sudden rash Anger, by Railings and Strife and bitter speaking, by Scoffs and Taunts, by Whisperings and Detraction, which are the common Exercise of base and unworthy Spirits.

This

This Commandment *requires*, that to the avoiding and Forbearance of all Injury to the Life of our Neighbour, we add a charitable Disposition and Desire of preserving it, and do accordingly act that Charity to our utmost Power to the Good and Comfort of his Life; using towards him Meekness and Patience, Clemency and Beneficence, doing him good, supplying his Wants, as we are able: For it is Cruelty to the Life of our poor Brethren, to be straight-handed towards them in the Day of their Necessity and our Abundance, at least of our comparatively better Estate, 1 *John* iii.

But we think we do much this Way, when upon right Trial we would find ourselves exceeding defective; we look upon our few and petty Acts of Charity with a multiplying Glass, and see one as it were ten. Who almost are there, that will draw somewhat from their Excesses, to turn into this Channel? that will abate a Lace from their Garment, or a Dish from their Table, to bestow upon the Necessities of the Poor? In a Word, we ought not only to be free from hurting, but be *a Tree of Life to our Neighbour*.

Inference.

Let us then be convinced of our Guiltiness in breach of this Precept. Men think it much if they can forgive, upon Acknowledgment and Submission of those that have injured them; but they aspire not to this, cordially to forgive those that still continue to wrong and provoke them, to compassionate them, and pray for them, and repay all their Evil with Meekness and Good-will.

We consider not how sublime the Rule of Christianity is, and how low our Spirits are, and how far off from it. *Be not overcome of Evil*, (says the Apostle) *but overcome Evil with Good*, Rom. xii. It is easy to overcome a Man that resists not, but yields; to pardon Injury when it ceaseth, and intreats Pardon: But when it holds out, and is so stout as still to fight against that Goodness and Meekness that it meets withal, yet the Christian ought to persist in these, and overcome it with Good. And see our Saviour's

viour's Rule to them that will be his Disciples, *Matth. v.* against Hatred and Wrath. Labour for humble Spirits. Pride is the Spring of Malice, and Desire of Revenge, and of rash Anger and Contention. This makes Men easily swell against any thing that crosses them, because they have laid down this with themselves, that they deserve to be observed and respected, and not cross'd at all; and when they find it otherwise, it kindles them to Anger: And it is not the Degree of Provocation, but the different Temper of Mens Spirits makes them more or less subject to Anger. It matters not how great the Fire be, but where it falls.

Consider first, that these turbulent Passions carry their Punishment along with them; they rankle and fester the Soul, and fill it full of Pain and Disturbance; whereas the Spirit of Meekness makes the Soul of a Christian like the highest Region of the Air, constantly calm and serene: The Apostle speaking of this Commandment of Love, says, *That the Commandments of God are not grievous.* Certainly there is such a true Pleasure in Meekness, forgiving of Injuries, and loving our very Enemies, that did Men know it, they would chuse it for the very Delight and Sweetness of it, though there were no Command to enforce it.

2. Consider, particularly against rash Anger, how weak and foolish a thing it is, *Anger resteth in the Bosom of Fools*, saith *Solomon*. A Fool's Breast is the very natural Place of Anger, where it dwells. But as he says elsewhere, *A Man of Understanding is of an excellent Spirit*, *Prov. xvii. 9.* the Word is, *a cool Spirit*. What a senseless Mistake is it for Men to think it Strength and Greatness of Spirit to bear nothing, to be sensible of every Touch, and stand upon their Punctilio's? Is it not evident Weakness to be able to suffer nothing? We see the weakest Persons most subject to Anger, Women, Children, and the Sick, and aged Persons; old Age being both a continued Sickness, and a Childishness, as they call it, and as the
Dregs

Dregs of Man's Life turned into Vinegar: It is the Weakness of all these that makes them fretful *. In a Word, it is *the Glory of a Man to pass by a Transgression*; every one can be angry, and most are they that are weakest; but to be above it, and have it under Command, is the Advantage of those that are truly wise, and therefore worthy of our Study to attain it.

3. That which should most prevail with Christians to study Love and Meekness of Spirit, and a Propension to do Good to all, is the Conformity that is in this Temper to our Head and Redeemer Jesus Christ, to partake of his Dove-like Spirit, *Learn of me* (says he) *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*, Gal. v. 20, 21, 22, 23. And this he hath given as the Commission and Badge of his Disciples, that as he loved them, so they love one another.

P R E C E P T VII.

Thou shalt not commit Adultery.

As the Perverseness of Nature hath found out crooked Ways, and sinful Abuses of things that we enjoy and use; the holy Law of God aims at the rectifying these Abuses, and bounding and limiting our Ways by a straight Rule.

And this Precept particularly bars us from all sinful Uncleanness, under the Name of one Kind of it.

That answerably to our Condition or Estate of Life, whatsoever it is, single, or married, we ought to endeavour that Cleanness, and Purity of Soul and Body, that becomes the Temples of the Holy Ghost.

I purpose not to reckon up particularly the several Sorts and Degrees of Sin of this Kind; for Chastity is a delicate tender Grace, and can scarce endure the much naming of itself, far less of those things that are so contrary to it; though in the Law of God

given

* Εἰς ὃν τρέπεται τὸ τοῦ λειψώματος. *Omne infirmum naturæ querulum.*

given to the People of the *Jews*, there is exprefs Mention of the groſs Abominations of this Kind, becauſe practiſed by the *Gentiles*, and to be forbidden them. And though the Apoſtle, writing to the *Gentiles* newly converted from thoſe Abominations, of neceſſity mentions Particulars of them; yet, further than that Neceſſity of reprov- ing them, where they are in Cuſtom requires, he hates the very naming of them, *Eph. v. 3. 12.* As the old *Roman* Satyrifts, while they ſeem to reprove Vice, rather teach it by their impudent Deſcriptions of it; the new *Roman* Caſuiſts, ſome of them, are as foul that Way.

It may ſuffice to regulate us in this, if we believe this Truth, that whatſoever is in this Kind, beſide the lawful Uſe of Marriage, is a Breach of this holy Law of God, whether it be in Action or in Words, or ſo much as in Thought. And, if this be true, (as it is, if we believe Truth itſelf, our Saviour's Interpretation) that an unchaſte Look, or Thought, make a Man guilty, then ſure whatſoever is beyond theſe, is more groſſly ſinful.

What a ſhameful thing is it, that our holy Profeſſion of Religion ſhould be ſo diſhonoured by the abounding of Uncleanneſs amongſt us? In many it breaks forth ſcandalouſly; and if there be any that live in that way of Wickedneſs undiscovered, and walk ſecretly in it; yet the pure Lord who perfectly ſees and hates it, will call them to account, and judge them, according to the Apoſtle's Word, *Heb. xiii. 4.* Conſider this likewise, any of you that have not lamented your former impure Converſation, but being reformed outwardly by your Years, or Condition of Life, yet never have inwardly repented, and been deeply humbled for the Sins of your Youth. True Converſion is not ſo light a Work: *David*, *Pſal. xxv.* remembers his former Sins, and prays earneſtly that God would not remember them againſt him: And on the contrary, you that think not on them, may juſtly fear that God

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will remember them, because you yourselves have forgot them.

They that give their Tongues the Liberty of scurrilous Jestings, and impure Speeches, cannot but have filthy Hearts, their noisom Breath argues Rottenness within.

Yea they that proceed no further in Uncleaness than to entertain and lodge the Fancies or Thoughts of it, rolling them in their Beds, and delighting in them even such are exceeding guilty and abominable in the Sight of God, who doth not only see into the Heart but most of all eyes and regards it. *Keep thy Heart above all keeping,* says Solomon, *for from thence are the Issues of Life.* Certainly, they that can dispense with themselves in these inward Heart Uncleanesses, and find no Remorse, cannot think the Spirit of God dwells within them; for if he were there, he would be shewing his Discontent and Anger against that Unholiness, which is so contrary to him.

And this they that have any Truth of Grace will find, that if they be not either free from the Assault or at least those filthy Birds, such impure Thoughts be not perfectly beaten away, when they light on the Soul, if they stay but any time with them, although they afterwards do chase them out with Indignation; yet they do leave such a Stain, and grieves and saddens the holy Spirit in them, and for a time they find it not act in Prayer, and in spiritual Comfort so chearfully as before. *Let no corrupt (or rotten *) Communication proceed out of your Mouth,* says the Apostle, *and grieve not the holy Spirit:* Rotten Speech grieves the holy Spirit, and do such Thoughts too, which are a Man's Speech with himself; and therefore being most familiar and frequent with him, ought to be most regarded, and watched over. There is not any thing will more readily dry up the Sweetness and spiritual Moisture of the Soul, and cause the Graces in it to wither than the impure Fire of Lust; therefore you that have

* Σάπρος.

have any Beginnings of Grace, and would have it flourish, beware of this, and quench it in its first Sparkles; if you do not, it may in a little time rise above your Power, and still prove very dangerous.

If you would be freed from the Danger and Importunity of this Evil, make Use of these usual and very useful Rules. *Rules.* 1. To be sober and temperate in Diet, withdraw Fewel. 2. Be modest and circumspect in your Carriage, guard your Ears, and Eyes, and watch over all your Deportment, beware of undue and dangerous Familiarities with any, upon what Pretence soever. 3. Be choice in your Society, for there is much in that. 4. In general, fly all Occasions and Incentives to Unclean-ness; but truly the solid Care must begin within, otherwise all these outward Remedies will prove but *empirick* Medicines, as they call them.

1. First then, lean not upon moral Resolves and particular Purposes against Unclean-ness, but seek a total entire Change of the Heart, and to find the sanctifying Spirit of Grace dwelling within you.

2. Labour to have the Heart possess'd with a deep Apprehension of the Holiness and Purity of God, and then of his Presence and Eye upon all thy Actions, yea thy most secret Thoughts. His Eye is more piercing than that any Wickedness can be hid from him, and more pure than to behold it without Indignation. The Darkness is as Noon day to him. I cannot steal a Thought out of his Sight, though it be never so sudden and short. Then think, "If I pretend to Communion and Converse with my God, he is all Holiness, therefore Unclean-ness can never attain that to which I aspire: What Communion hath Light with Darkness, or Christ with *Belial*, and shall I lose or hazard the Sweetness of his Presence for so base a Delight? How can I offer that Heart to him in Prayer, that hath been wallowing in the Mire of unclean Practice or Imagination?" Resolve to drive out the As-

faults that you are incident to. "How shall I do, or think thus? My holy God is looking on me." This was *Joseph's* Preservation, *Shall I do this Evil, and sin against God.*

3. Acquaint yourselves with spiritual Delights, and this will make a happy Diversion from those that are sensual and earthly. Somewhat a Man must have to delight in. It is the Philosopher's Remark, that they that know not the true Pleasure of the Mind, turn to the base Pleasures of the Body.

Some moral Men seeking higher Delight of the Mind, in their Way have persuaded themselves to a generous Disdain of their Bodies? How much more powerfully may supernatural Delights of the Soul, Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost, wean it from those gross sensual Pleasures, that the Beasts have in common with us, at least from the immoderate Desire, and all unlawful Pursuit of them. Nothing indignifies the Soul more than Lust. When *David* had sinn'd this Way, it had so made Havock of Grace within him, that he cries not only for cleansing, but for a new Creation, as if all were undone, *Create in me a clean Heart, &c. Psal. li.* and found it so slavish and ignoble a Sin, that he prays to be re-establish'd by God with a free or noble Spirit.

4. Increase in the Love of Christ; for as that grows, there is a Decrease of the Love of Sin, yea, of the immoderate Love of all inferior Things: As the Sun-beams eat out the Fire, this divine and heavenly Love consumes the other. All our Love is too scarce or poor for him, when it is recollected and drawn altogether to run only towards him; and therefore there is none to spare upon the Flesh, and the Lusts of it, nor upon any Creature, but as he allows and appoints: The Sense of his Love takes up the whole Soul, and he lodging in it, is that true *Agnus castus* that makes it chaste, that Bundle of Myrrh that hath a Virtue to preserve the Christian from the Corruptions of Lust.

That

That Love of Jesus Christ is strong as Death, kills all opposite Affections; and indeed it alone is worthy of the Soul, the noble immortal Soul. Oh how is it abased when it is drawn down to Sensuality, and so made a Slave to its Servant the Flesh! *Major sum & ad majora genitus*, (could a Roman Philosopher say) *quàm ut sim mancipium mei corporis*, I am greater, and born to greater Things than to be a Slave to my Body. How unworthy is it, that being capable of the highest Good, the Fruition of God, we should forget ourselves so far as to serve vile Lust, and forfeit the Happiness and Pleasures of Eternity? Far be it from us, God hath called us to *Holiness*, and not to *Uncleanness*, says the Apostle.

Fly all unlawful and forbidden Delights; and those that are lawful, do not engage your Hearts to them, love them not immoderately: And they can scarce be loved without Excess, if loved at all. Shall I say then, if you use them yet love them not, reserve that for purer Enjoyments? Says not the Apostle this, *Let them that rejoice, be as if they rejoiced not*; and particularly, *They that marry, as if they married not*? And his Reason is weighty, *For the Fashion of this World passeth away*, &c.

Remember to what a pure and excellent Condition we are called as Christians, and with what a Price we are bought to be holy; and let it be our firm Purpose and Study to glorify God in our Souls and Bodies, for they are his.

P R E C E P T VIII.

Thou shalt not steal.

God is the God of Order, and not of Confusion: It is he that hath authorized and appointed Propriety of Possessions unto Men, and withal that Society and Commerce amongst them that serves for their mutual Good; and (Propriety reserved) makes one Man in what he possesses useful and helpful to another:

another : And hath given this Precept of his Law, to regulate them in these Things, to be the Rule of that which we call *Contentation* or *Justice*, Equity towards our Neighbour, in matter of his Goods or proper Possessions.

Scope. This then being the Scope of the Commandment, whatsoever breaks this Hedge, is as comprehended under the Name of *Theft*, here forbidden. All Manner of Injustice and Wrong done to our Neighbour in his Estate, whether by Violence, or by Slight of hand, by Force or Fraud, yea if it be but so much as in Affection or Desire ; for (as we have often said) the Law is spiritual, and binds not only the Hands but the Heart.

So then, not only gross Robberies and Thefts are here forbidden, but all Oppression and Extortion in Superiors, all Purloining and Unfaithfulness in Inferiors ; too strict Exaction in Masters, and Slothfulness in Servants, or whatsoever else may tend to their Master's Damage ; all Bribery, and receiving of Gifts, to the perverting of Justice ; all Deceit and over-reaching in Commerce, or trading, or bargaining ; taking Advantage in buying or selling, or any Contract, upon the Ignorance or Simplicity of those we deal withal ; all Desire and seeking of our Neighbour's Loss to our Gain ; all the Degrees of Sacrilege and Simony ; all Idleness and Neglect in Mens particular Callings, by which they either impoverish themselves, and are worse than Infidels, not providing for their Families ; or, if they have certain Provision by their Callings, in neglecting the Duties of them, they wrong those from whom, or for whose sakes they are so provided, as Magistrates and Ministers, who have or should have honourable Maintenance for their publick Service, the one in the Common-wealth, the other in the Church : And it is a great Sin to curtail or detain what is due the Way, so it is no less Wickedness in them, if they be remiss and careless of those Duties to which they are obliged for the publick Good. In a Word, whosoever

ever can digest any Kind of undue Gain to themselves, or do any Prejudice to their Neighbour in the least, are guilty; yea, they sin against this Precept that do not with all their Power further the Advantage and Good of their Neighbour in his outward Condition, that do not help and relieve those they see in Want, so far as their Ability reaches.

There is a Kind of Right that the Poor have to Supply; it is not merely arbitrary to you. Though they have not such a Right as to take it at their own Hand, or to seek it at the Houses of human Justice, yet they have such a Right as that your Hand ought not to detain it. *With-hold not Good from them to whom it is due*, Prov. iii. 27. which is evidently meant (and Interpreters take it so) of all Kind of doing Good, even that of Charity and Beneficence to the Needy, as appears by the following Clause, *when it is in the Power of thine Hand to do it*, and the Septuagint *εὐπορεῖν τὸν ἐνδεῆ*. 'Tis due, they have a Right to it, though not such as they can implead for before Men's Courts or Judicatures, yet in the Court of Conscience, and in the Sight of God, it is duly theirs; the Word is, *From him that is Lord of it. It is the Bread of the hungry that moulds by thee, and the Drink of thirsty that sowres by thee* *. Although thou art in Possession, hast Superfluity by thee, what he wants is his by Right, he is Lord of it; for the Lord of all hath turn'd over his Right to thy poor Brother. The Lord himself needs it not; thy Goodness cannot reach him; he hath furnish'd thee with such as need it, and may be his Receivers, and have Warrant from him to take it up in his Stread: And be sure he will acknowledge the Receipt of it; thou hast his own Word and Writ for it, a Bill of Exchange under his own Hand, that what you give to the poor be put upon his Accounts. *He that giveth to the Poor lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay it*: And again, *In that you did it unto one of these,*

C c 4

these,

* *Esurientium panis est qui apud te murescit, & sitientium potus qui apud te acescit.* Amb.

these, says our Saviour, *ye did it unto me*. It is the surest and lastingest Part of a Man's Estate that is put into their Hand, if God be *solvendo*, if he be a sufficient Debtor *. It is Treasure laid up in Heaven.

So then this Precept requires Uprightness and Equity in all our Dealings, a Desire to right and advantage our Brethren as ourselves, willing their Gain and Prosperity as our own; Diligence and Industry in our Callings, and giving to all others their Due. Though Men are not obliged to a sottish Simplicity, but ought to endeavour so to understand their Affairs, that they may avoid Circumvention by others Craft; yet a prudent Simplicity is the right Stamp of a Christian Mind, to be single and ingenuous, and rather to suffer Loss from others, than cause them any. In a Word, the Apostle's Rule is express and full, *1 Thess. iv. 16. That no Man over-reach or defraud his Brother in any Matter*, and he adds a very forcible Reason, *because the Lord is the Avenger of all such; as we have also* (says he) *forewarned you and testified*. Men are ready to find out poor Shifts to deceive themselves, when they have some way deceived their Brother; and to stop the Mouth of their own Conscience with some Quibble, and some slight Excuse, and force themselves at length to believe they have done no wrong: Therefore the Apostle, to fright them out of their Shifts, sets before them an exacter Judge, that cannot be deceived nor mocked, that shall one Day unveil the Conscience, and blow away these vain self Excuses as Smoke; and that just Lord will punish all Injustice, *He is the Avenger of all such*.

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At the first View a Man would think the Breach of this Commandment concerns but few Persons, some Thieves and Robbers, and some profest Deceivers, or if you add some couzening Tradesmen and Merchants; but the Truth is, there is scarce any of the Commandments so universally and frequently broken, and whereof the Breach is

* *Quas dederis scias semper habebis opes.*

so little observed, and therefore so seldom repented of by the greatest Part. As the Apostle *James* says, *He is a perfect Man that offends not in his Words*; truly he is a rare Man that offends not, and that remarkably, if Men would remark themselves, against this Commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*.

To say nothing of the Oppression and hard Exactions of such as are Superiors of Lands, grinding the Faces of the Poor, and squeezing them till the Blood come; and so putting in the same Blood of the Poor amongst their Estates, that many times proves a Canker to all the rest; and the Thievishness of Servants, and of the poorer Sort, making no Conscience at all of whatsoever they can filch from their Masters, or those that are richer than they, counting all they can snatch good Booty and lawful Prize: To pass by likewise the particular Deceits that are usual in several Callings, and are incorporate with them through long Custom, and become a Part of the Mystery of those Callings, and therefore Men dispense with themselves in them, as the inseparable Sin of their Calling, and have no Remorse for them: Not to insist on these and such like, consider how frequently this *Meum & Tuum, Mine and Thine*, proves the Apple of Strife betwixt the nearest Friends, and divides their Affections, and begets Debates amongst them; Parents, and Children, and Brethren, &c. And certainly there is always some unjust Desire on one Side in those Contentions, and sometimes on both Sides. How few are there that have Hearts so weaned from the World, as in all Things to prefer the smallest Point of Equity to the greatest Temptation of Gain? that in their Affairs, and all that concerns them, are universally careful to deal with an even Hand, and even Heart; and to keep close to that Golden Rule drawn in Nature, but almost lost and smothered in the Rubbish and Corruption of Nature, but drawn a-new by our Saviour's Hand: not only in his Gospel, but in the Hearts of his real Followers, *That which thou wouldst*

wouldest have others do to thee, do thou unto them: That when they have any thing to transact, wherein is their Brother's Interest and their own, do in their Thoughts change Places with him, set him in their own Room, and themselves in his, and deal with him after that Manner; that think, "What would " I be willing to have done to me were I he, that " same will I do to him? Were I in that poor Man's " Condition that begs an Alms, would I not rather " have some Relief, than a churlish, or at least, an " empty Answer? Were I he that buys, would I " not, and might I not justly and reasonably will to " have it so, that no more be exacted of me than the " right and due Price? then so will I use him."

How few that walk (I say) by this Rule? and yet all that do not thus, are Breakers of this Commandment in the Sight of God.

How few that are inviolable Observers of Equity, and are truly liberal and bountiful answerably to their Power? that will sometimes on purpose bate a Dish from their Table, or a Lace from their Garment, not to make their Stock greater, but to bestow on the Poor? that are truly desirous of the Good and Prosperity of others, and further it all they can?

'Tis to be like God, this is the particular, *Matth.* v. wherein Likeness to our heavenly Father is prest; and this is meant by *Homo homini Deus*. Certainly were we acquainted with it, it is more true Delight to be not only just but liberal, than to possess much; it is not to possess, but to be possess'd by it, to have Heaps, and no Heart nor Power to use them. He that is thus, doth not only defraud others but himself, steals* from his own Necessities to sacrifice to his God, his Chest or Bag. When a Man hath such a Sum, and though he hath Use for it dares not break it, what is it better than if it were still under Ground in the Mine, it is no more at his Service; yea, so much the worse that he is racked betwixt Plenty and Want, betwixt having and not having it.

Both

* *Quicquid omnibus abstulit, sibi negat.*

Both the Covetous and the Prodigal sin against this Commandment: The Covetous by unjust ways of gaining, and unjust keeping what he hath gained, keeping it up both from others and himself: And the Prodigal by Profuseness, making foolish Wants to himself, that drive him upon unjust ways of Supply *. Thus he that is prodigal must be covetous too; and though Men think not so, these two Vices that seem so opposite, not only may, but do often dwell together, and Covetousness is Prodigality's Purveyor, being Fire for it to feed it, for otherwise it could not subsist, but would starve within a while. Here then both Avarice and Prodigality are condemned; only true Equity, and frugal and wise Liberality are Obedience to it.

The main Causes of all unjust and illiberal Dealing are these two, 1. Diffidence or Distrust of the divine Providence and Goodness. 2. And that *Πλεονεξία*, that same *Amor sceleratus habendi*, the fond Desire of having much.

1. When a Man doth not fully trust God with providing for him, and blessing him in just and lawful Ways, but apprehends Want unless he take some more Liberty and Elbow-room; this makes him step now and then out of the Way, to catch at undue Gain by Fraud and Over-reaching, or some such Way: But this is a most foolish Course, this is to break loose out of God's fatherly Hand, and so to forego all that we can look for from him, and to take Ways of our own, to chuse rather to go a shifting for ourselves in the crooked and accursed Ways of Unrighteousness, than to be at his providing. Labour therefore for fixed Belief of his Wisdom and Goodness, and All-sufficiency, and then the greatest Straits and Wants will not drive you to any indirect Ways, wherein you run from him, but will still draw you nearer to himself, and there you will stay and wait upon his Hand till he supply you.

2. Desire

* *Turpiter amittens quod turpius repareret.* Sen.

2. Desire of having much, or Covetousness, whether it be to hoard up or lavish out. But this is a Madness; this Desire of having much is never cured by having much, it is an unsatiable * Dog-hunger.

That known Determination of the Moralist was the most true, that to be truly rich, is not to have much, but to desire little; labour then not to desire much, or rather desire much, desire to have the Lord for your Portion; † and if you indeed desire him, you shall have him, and if you have him, you cannot but be satisfied, for he is all: To him therefore be all Praise, Honour, and Glory for ever. *Amen.*

P R E C E P T IX.

Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.

The Apostle St. James, in that sharp but most true Censure of the Tongue, might well call it an *unruly Evil*. There are but ten Precepts or Words of the Law of God, and you see two of them, so far as concerns the outward Organ and Vent of the Sins there forbidden, are bestowed on it, tending, if not only, yet mainly to keep it in order; one in the first Table, and this other in the second, as being ready to fly out both against God and Man, if not thus bridled.

The End of the Commandment is to guard the good Name of Men from Injury, as the former doth his Goods; this Possession being no less, yea, much more precious than the other: And because the great Robber and Murtherer of a good Name, is the mischievous detracting Tongue, acted by a malignant Heart; it requires in the Heart a charitable Tenderness of the good Name of our Brethren, and that will certainly prove Truth and charitable Speech in the Tongue.

Though

* Βελίμια, *vel canina fames.*

† *Non est illud desiderium, πλεονεξία sed πανεξία.*

Though Divines here usually speak of Lying, in the general Notion and Extent of it, and not amiss, being most of all exercised in the Kind here mentioned; yet there be such Lies, as may be more fitly reputed a Breach of some other Commandment; and possibly, the Sin of lying in general, as it is a Lie, a Discrepance of the Speech from the Mind, and so a subverting of the divine Ordinance set in Nature, making that which he hath made the Interpreter of the Mind, to be the Disguiser of it, and withal disregarding God as the Searcher of the Heart, and sovereign Witness of Truth, and Avenger of Falshood; I say, thus it may possibly be more proper to refer it to another Commandment, particularly to the third: But it imports not much to be very punctual in this; it is seldom or never that one Commandment is broke alone, most Sins are complicate Disobedience, and in some Sins, the Breach of many at once is very apparent. As to instance, in Perjury, if it be to testify a Falshood against our Brethren, both the third Commandment and this ninth are violate at once; and if it be in such a thing as toucheth his Life, the sixth likewise suffers with them.

This Perjury or false Testimony in a publick judiciary Way, is, we see, by the express Words and Letter of the Command forbidden, as the highest and most heinous Wrong of this Kind *: But under the Name of this (as it is in the other Commandments) all the other Kinds and Degrees of Offence against our Neighbours good Name are comprised, 1. All private Ways of Calumny and false Imputation. 2. All ungrounded and false Surmises or Suspicions, all uncharitable Construction of others Actions and Carriage. 3. Strict remarking of the Faults of others, without any Calling so to do, or honest Intention of their Good; which appears, if, having observed any thing that of Truth is reprovab, we seek not to reclaim them by secret and friendly Admonition, but passing by themselves divulge it abroad to others:

* *Ut testis falsi aut testimonium falsi non dices aut respondeas.*

others: For this is a most foolish Self-conceit to think, that because it is not forged, but true that thou speakest, this keeps thee free of the Commandment; no, thy false Intention and Malice * makes it Calumny and Falshood in thee, although for the Matter of it, what thou sayest be most true; all thou gaineest by it is, that thou dost tumble and bemire thyself in the Sin of another, and makest it possibly more thine, than it is his own, that committed it; for he, may be, hath some Touch of Remorse for it; whereas it is evident thou delightest in it: And tho' thou preface it with a whining feigned Regret and Semblance of pitying him, and add withal some Word of commending him in somewhat else; this is but the gilding and sugaring the Pill to make Men swallow it the more easily, and thy bitter Malice pass unperceived. They that by their Calling ought to watch over the Lives of others, must do it faithfully and diligently, admonishing and rebuking privately; and where that prevails not, they may, yea, they ought to do it more publicly, but all in Love, seeking nothing but the Glory of God and the Salvation of Souls. 4. Easy hearing and entertaining of Misreports and Detraction when others speak them, *Exod. xxiii. 1.* this is that which maintains and gives Subsistence to Calumny, otherwise it would starve and dye of itself, if no Body took it in and gave it Lodging. When Malice pours it out, if our Ears be shut against it, and there be no Vessel to receive it, it would fall like Water upon the Ground, and could no more be gathered up: but there is that same busy Humour that Men have, it is very busy, and yet the most have of it more or less, a kind of Delight and Contentment to hear Evil of others, unless it be of such as they affect; to hear others slighted and disesteemed, that they readily drink in not without some Pleasure, whatsoever is spoken of this Kind. *The Ear trieth the Words* (as he says in *Job*)

* Ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ, Eph. iv. *We must not only speak the Truth, but in Love.*

as the Mouth tasteth Meats, but certainly the most Ears are perverse and distempered in their Taste, as some kind of Palates are; can find Sweetness in fowre Calumny. But, because Men understand one anothers Diet in this, that the most are so; this is the very thing that keeps up the Trade, makes Backbiting and Detractions abound so in the World, and verifies that known Observation in the most, that the Slanderer wounds three at once, himself, him he speaks of, and him that hears: For this third, truly it is in his Option to be none of the Number; if he will, he may shift his Part of the Blow, by not believing the Slander; yea, may beat it back again with Ease upon the Slanderer himself by a Check or Frown, and add that Stroke of a Repulse to the Wound of Guiltiness he gives himself. 5. They offend that seek in any Kind, at the Expence of the good Name and Esteem of others, to increase their own, out of others Ruins to make up themselves*; and therefore pull down as much as they can, and are glad to have others to help them to detract from the Repute of their Brethren, particularly, any that are in Likelihood to surpass and obscure them; and for this Reason incline always rather to hear and speak of the Imperfections and Dispraise of others, than to their Advantage, and would willingly (*Ottoman-like*) kill the good Name of their Brethren, that theirs may reign alone†. This is a vile Disease, and such as cannot be incident to any Mind that is truly virtuous and gracious; no, such need not this base dishonest Way to raise themselves, but are glad to see Virtue, and whatsoever is Praise-worthy, to flourish in whomsoever; these are Lovers of God indeed, and his Glory, and not their own; and therefore

* *Ex alieni nominis jactura gradum sibi faciunt ad gloriam.* Sallust.

† *The Rabbins frequently condemn this.* Hammith Cabbed, &c. *qui honorat se ex ignominia socii sui, non habet partem in seculo venturo.* Beres. Rab. Item, *qui per contemptum aliorum laudem suam querit, miserrimus est omnium hominum. Quis est honore dignus? qui honorat alios homines.* Aboth. c. 4.

fore as all he bestows on themselves, they venture back the Honour of it to him, so they are glad to see many enriched with his best Gifts; for seeing all Good that all have belongs to God, as the sovereign Owner and Dispenser, this contents and rejoices his Children when they see many partake of his Bounty, for the more is his Glory: And as in Love to their Brethren, they are always willing to take notice of what is commendable in them, and to commend it, so they do this the more willingly, because they know that all Praise of Goodness at last terminates and ends in God, as *Solomon* says of the Rivers, *Unto the Place from whence they come, thither they return again.* 6. They sin against this Commandment, that although they no way wrong their Neighbours good Name, yet are not careful to do their utmost to right it when it suffers, to remove Aspersions from them, and to clear them all that may be.

For this is here required, to desire and delight in, and further the good Name of others, even as our own, to look most willingly on the fairest Side of their Actions, and take them in the best Sense, and be as inventive of favourable Constructions (yet without favouring Vice) as Malice is witty to misinterpret to the worst: To observe the commendable Virtues of our Brethren, and pass by their Failings; as many, like scurvy Flies, skip over what is found in Men, and love to sit upon their Sores.

Infer. It is lamentable to consider how much this Evil of mutual Detraction, and supplanting the good Name one of another is rooted in Man's corrupt Nature, and how it spreads and grows in their Converse, as the Apostle *St. Paul* cites it out of the *Psalmist*, as the Description of our Nature *Their Throat is an open Sepulchre, they have deceitful Tongues, and the Poison of Asps is under their Lips.* *Rom. iii.* Their Throat an open Sepulchre, full of the Bones as it were of others good Names that they have devoured: And, *Rom. i.* amongst other their Endowments, they are Whisperers, Backbiters, de-
spiteful

piteful. But it is strange that Christians should retain so much of these Evils, that profess themselves renewed, and sanctified, and guided by the Spirit of God. Consider in your Visits and Discourses, if something of this Kind doth not entertain you often, and lavish away that time you might spend in mutual Edifications, abusing it to descant upon the Actions and Life of others, in a Way as neither concerns nor profits us, taking an impertinent foolish Delight in enquiring and knowing how this Party lives, and the other *. This is a very common Disease, as Nazianzen observes; and thus Men are most Strangers at home, have not Leisure to study and know and censure themselves, they are so busied about others. It may be there is not always a Height of Malice in their Discourses, but yet by much babbling to no Purpose, they slide into idle Detraction and Censure of others besides their Intention, for in *Multitude of Words there wants not Sin*.

And the greatest Part are so accustomed to this Way, that if they be put out of it, they must sit dumb and say nothing. There is, I confess, a prudent Observation of the Actions of others, a reading of Men, as they call it, and it may be by a Christian done with Christian Prudence and Benefit; and there may be too an useful Way of Mens imparting their Observation of this Kind one to another concerning the Good and Evil, the Abilities more or less that they remark in the World; but truly it is hard to find such as can do this a-right, and know they agree in their Purpose with honest harmless Minds, intending Evil to none, but Good to themselves, and admitting of nothing but what suits with this. Amongst a Throng of Acquaintance a Man shall, it may be, find very few by whose Conversation he may be really bettered, and that return him some Benefit for the Expence of his time in their Society.

D d

Howsoever,

* *Curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam, desiderium ad corrigendam suam.* Aug. conf. l. 10. cap. 3. *ἐὼς ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὡς τὸ λαλεῖν τὰ ἀλλότρια.* Orat. 1.

Howsoever, beware of such as delight in Vanity and Lying, and defaming of others, and withdraw yourselves from them, and set a Watch before your own Lips; learn to know the fit Season of Silence and Speech, for that is a very great Point of Wisdom, and will help very much to the observing this Precept, to give your Tongue to be governed by Wisdom and Piety; let it not be as a thorny Bush, pricking and hurting those that are about you, not altogether a barren Tree yielding nothing, but a fruitful Tree, *a Tree of Life to your Neighbour*, as Solomon calls the Tongue of the Righteous.

And let your Hearts be possesst with those two excellent Graces, Humility and Charity, then will your Tongue not be in danger of hurting your Neighbour, for it is Pride and Self-love makes Men delight in that. Those are the Idols to which Men make Sacrifice of the good Name and Reputation of others. The humble Man delights in Self-disesteem, and is glad to see his Brethrens Name flourish, it is pleasing Musick to him to hear of the Virtues of others acknowledged and commended, and a harsh Discord to his lowly Thoughts to hear any Thing of his own. And the other, Charity, *thinks no Evil*, is so far from casting false Aspersions on any, that it rather casts a Veil upon true Failings and Blemishes: *Love covers a Multitude of Sins*, it is like God's Love that begets it, which covers all the Sins of his own Children.

P R E C E P T X.

Thou shalt not covet, &c.

It is a known Truth, that there is no sound Cure of Diseases without the Removal of their inward Cause; therefore this second Table of the Law, containing the Rule of Equity for the Redress of Unrighteousness in Mens Dealing one with another, doth in this last Precept of it strike at the very Root of that Unrighteousness,

righteousness, the corrupt Desires and evil Concupiscence of the Heart, *Thou shalt not covet, &c.*

The *Romish* Division of this into two, is so grossly absurd, and so contrary both to the Voice of Antiquity and Reason, that it needs not stay us much to shew it such. The thing forbidden is one, *Thou shalt not covet*; and if the several things not to be coveted divide it, it will be five or six as well as two. Though it be *Peter's* pretended Sword makes the Division, yet certainly it is not *Paul's* *ὀρθότομῳ*, not a dividing of the Word aright, but cutting it as it were besides the Joint. The Truth is, they would never have mistook so far as to have offered at this Division, were they not driven upon it by an evil Necessity of their own making; because they have quite cut out the second, they are forced, for making up the Number, to cut this in two. This is but to salve a first Wrong with a second, it is *Vitium primæ concoctionis quod non corrigitur in secunda*, as they speak; having smothered one Commandment, they would have this divided, as the Harlot the living Child. The Subject of this Commandment, that which it forbids is not I confess Original Sin in its Nature and whole Latitude; nor all kind of sinful Motions immediately arising from it, but such as concern human things, belonging to this second Table as their Rule; as is clear in all the Particulars named in the Commandment, and the general Word that closes it including the rest, and all other things of that Kind, *Nor any thing that is thy Neighbour's*. Nor is it needful (with others) for the distinguishing this Precept from the rest, to call this Concupiscence here forbidden, only the first Risings of it in the Heart, without Consent, whereas the other Commandments forbid the Consent of the Will: I conceive there is no Danger to say, that both are forbidden, both in this and the rest, but in this more expressly.

For what great Necessity is there of such subtle distinguishing? May not this be sufficient, that what is included in the other Commandments duly under-

stood, it pleased the Divine Wisdom to deliver in this last more expressly, that none might pretend Ignorance, and so to provide for the more exact Observance of Justice, and Equity amongst Men in their Actions, by a particular Law given to the Heart, the Fountain of them, regulating it in its Disposition and Motions, even the very first stirrings of it, which do most discover its Disposition?

And that this is no Tautology, nor a superfluous Labour, unsuited the exquisite Brevity of this Law, we will easily confess, if we consider that natural Hypocrisy and Self-indulgence that is in Men, that makes them still less regard the Temper and Actings of their Hearts, than their outward Carriage, notwithstanding this express Commandment concerning it; how much more would they have thought their Thoughts, at least such as proceed not to full Consent, exempted from the Law, if there had been nothing spoke of them, but they only included in the other Precepts? We know how the Doctors of Rome extenuate the Matter, and how favourable their Opinion is in this Point, notwithstanding this clear Voice of the Law of God condemning all Concupiscence. The Apostle St. Paul confesses ingenuously his own Short-sightedness, though a Pharisee instructed in the Law, that unless the Law had said, *Thou shalt not lust*, Rom. vii. he had not found it out in the other Commandments, nor known the Sinfulness of it.

This all-wise Lawgiver knew both the Blindness of Man's Mind, and the Hypocrisy and Deceitfulness of his Heart, and therefore takes away all Pretext, and turns him out of all Excuse, giving this last Commandment expressly concerning the Heart, and so teaching him the exact and spiritual Nature of all the rest.

This Commandment pursues the Iniquity of Man into its Beginning and Source. Our Saviour calls the evil Heart, an *evil Treasure*; it is an inexhaustible Treasure of Evil, yea it diminisheth not at all, but increaseth

increaseth rather by spending: The acting of Sin, confirming and augmenting the corrupt Habit of it in the Heart, *Out of this evil Treasure issue forth those Pollutions that defile the whole Man, evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, &c. Matt. xv.*

It is not proper here to speak at large of the first Motions of Sin in general, and of the way to difference (if any such can be given as certain) the Injections of Satan; evil Thoughts darted in by him, and such as spring immediately from that Corruption that lodgeth within our own Breasts, and other Things that concern the Subject: Only this we ought to observe as pertinent and useful, that if we did consider the Purity of the Law of God, and the Impurity of our own Hearts, the continual Risings of sinful Concupiscences within us, that stain us and all our Actions, this would lay us a great deal lower in our own Opinion than usually we are, *The Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under Sin*, says the Apostle.

Men think it is well with them, and they please themselves to think so, and glory in it, that their whole Life hath been outwardly unblameable, and possibly free from the secret Commission of gross Sins: But would they that are thus most spotless, look a little deeper inward upon the incessant Workings of vain sinful Thoughts, that at least touch upon the Affection, and stir it somewhat; and consider their Hearts naturally like boiling Pots, still sending up of this Scum of evil Concupiscence, and as a Fountain casteth forth her Waters, as *Jeremy* speaks, this bitter Poison-spring still streaming forth, and even in the best not fully dried up.

There are three Transgressions, * say the *Talmudists*, from which a Man can no Day ever in this Life be free; the Thoughts of Sin, Wandrings in Prayer, and an evil Tongue.

D d 3

Certainly

* *Tres sunt transgressiones, à quibus homo nullo die, inquit Talmudici, nunquam in hac vita liberabitur, cogitationes peccati, attentionis, (i. e. quod nunquam satis attentò per omnem attentionem orare possit;) & lingua mala.* Bava. Bofca. f. 1342.

Certainly the due Sight of these would abate much of those gay Thoughts that any can have of themselves, and from the best and most sensible would draw out the Apostle's Word, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me, &c. Rom. vii. 24.* There is nothing that doth more certainly both humble and grieve the godly Man, than the Sense of this; and because till then it will not cease to vex him, nothing makes him more long for the Day of his full Deliverance, and makes him cry, *Usquequo, Domine, usquequo? O how long, O Lord, how long?*

2. We are taught by this Commandment that great Point of spiritual Prudence, to observe the Beginnings and Conception of Sin within us, and to crush it then when it is weakest, before it pass on in its usual Gradation, as the Apostle St. *James* makes it, *Ja. i. 14, 15.* If it draw us away but to hear it, it will entice us, take us with Delight, and then it will by that work us to consent, and having so conceiv'd, it will bring forth Sin, and Sin finish'd will bring forth Death.

3. Because (as we see) the very Concupiscence itself, though it proceed no further, pollutes and leaves a Stain behind it; this calls for our Diligence, to seek that Renovation and habitual Purity of Heart infus'd from above, and the daily Increase of it, being begun, that may free us more and more from that deprav'd Concupiscence and the Defilements of it. Think it not enough to cleanse the Tongue and the Hands, but above all endeavour for Cleanness of Heart, and that will keep all the rest clean, *Ja. iv. 8. Jer. iv. 14.*

The Concupiscence particularly here forbid, we see, is an inordinate Desire, or the least Beginning of such a Desire of those outward Things that belong not to us, *Thy Neighbour's House, &c.* for all Breach of the other Commandments of this second Table have their Rise and Beginning from such Desire: therefore this is set last, as the Hedge to guard all the rest from Violation: For certainly he that flies the

the least Motion of a wrongful Thought, will never proceed to any injurious Word or Action. So then, this Commandment is broken by the least envious Look upon any Good of others, or the least Bendings of Mind after it for ourselves, and by that common Mischief of Self-love, as the very thing that gives Life to all such undue Desires, and by that common Folly of Discontent at our own Estate, which begets a wishing for that of others; and this, though it be not joined with an express Desire of their Loss or Hurt, yet because it is the Seed and Principle of Injustice, therefore it is sinful, and here forbidden.

And on the contrary, much of the Observance of this Precept lies in that *αὐτάρκεια*, that Contentedness and Satisfaction of Mind with our own Estate, which will surely keep us free from this disorder'd coveting. Therefore primely labour to have that wise and sweet Contentation dwelling within you, and banish all contrary Thoughts, by these and other such like Considerations.

1. If you do indeed believe that it is the sovereign Hand of God that *divides to the Nations their Inheritance*, as *Moses* speaks, *Deut. xxxii. 8.* and so likewise to particular Men, that he carves to every one their Condition and Place in the World, you cannot but think he hath done it more wisely than Men could do for themselves. They could never agree upon it, every Man would think it best for himself to be in the best and highest Condition, and that is not possible; but it is best for the making up of the Universe, that there be those Differences God hath made, and from the highest to the lowest he hath set each one in that Station he thought good. There is not a common Soldier in an Army but would wish to be a Commander, and so if each might have his Will, all would command and none obey. The like holds in Masters and Servants, and in all such other Differences. So then, seeing those Differences are in the World, and seeing it wholly belongs to him that rules the World to dispose of them, our

Part is no more but contentedly to accept of his Dispose, and to serve him in the Station where he hath set us.

2. If you be such as have Evidence you are the Children of God, then you know he doth not only allot your Condition wisely, but withal in peculiar Love and Favour; he perfectly knows what outward Estate is particularly fittest for you, and will conduce most to your highest Good, and will not miss to give you that, and no other. And certainly it is true in matter of Estate, as of our Garments, not that which is largest, but that which fits us best, is best for us.

3. Consider that no outward Condition hath Contentment in it of itself, this must arise from somewhat within: Men see the great Attendance and Train of Servants that wait upon Princes and other great Persons, but they see not the Train of Cares and perplexing Thoughts that many Times go along too, and are more inseparable Attendants than any of the rest; they see their fine Cloaths and stately Buildings, but they see not the secret Malecontents and Vexations that dwell with them, and are the very Linings of their rich Apparel. Light Things often discontent them; look but on their very Pastimes and Recreations, they are sometimes as much troubled with Disappointment in those, as the poor Man is wearied with his Labour. It was not a much greater Cross that vex'd *Haman*; all his Advancement availed not without *Mordecai's* Courtesy: A strange Disease, that he felt more the Pain of another Man's stiff Knee, than the Contentment of all his Honours. But whoso knew their deeper Vexations would admire them less, when cross'd in their Ambition or Friends, or the Husband and Wife not finding that Harmony of Dispositions and Affections: Few or none but have something that a Man would willingly leave out, if he were for his Wish to be in their Condition. The shorter and surer Way then to Contentment, is, to be contentedly what he is.

4. Consider those that are below you, and in a far meaner Condition, and by that argue yourself, not only to Contentment but to Thankfulness. We pervert all; when we look below us, it raises our Pride; and when above us, it casts us into Discontent: Might we not as well contrariwise draw Humility out of the one, and Contentment out of the other.

5. Seek to be assur'd that God is yours, then whatsoever others possess, you will be sure not to covet it, nor envy them. Those that have most, you will pity, if they want him; and those that have him, you will have no Evil at them for sharing with you, but love them the more: For that infinite Good is enough for all that chuse him, and none do so but those whom he hath first chosen in eternal Love.

A
DISCOURSE
ON

MATTHEW XXII. 37, 38, 39.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; and thy Neighbour as thyself.

THE Wisdom and Meekness of our Saviour is the more remarkable, and shines the brighter, by the Malice of his Adversaries; and their Cavils and tempting Questions occasion our Benefit and Instruction. Thus here,

We

We see the Words are the Sum of the whole Law, and they are taken out of the Book of the Law: They are called *two Commandments*; the former is the Sum of the first, the latter of the second Table, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c.* That is, says our Saviour, *the first and great Commandment.* Our first Obligation is to God, and through him and for his sake to Men: *The second like to it.*

Seems it not rather contrary than like to the former; whereas in the former the whole Stream of Love is directed in one undivided Current towards God, this other Commandment seems to cut up a new Channel for it, and to turn a great part of it to Men, *Thy Neighbour as thyself?* No, they are not contrary, if we take them right; yea, they do not only agree, but are inseparable; they do not divide our Love, but they set it in its right Course; first wholly to God, as the sovereign Good, and only for himself worthy to be loved; and then back from him, it is according to his own Will derived downwards to our Neighbour; for then only we love both ourselves and others aright, when we make our Love to him the Reason and the Rule of both *. So then our Love is to be immediately divided betwixt him and our Neighbour, or any Creature, but is first all to be bestowed on him, and then he diffuses by way of Reflexion so much of it upon others as he thinks fit; being all in his Hands, it is at his Dispose, and that which he disposes elsewhere as here, (*Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*) it is not taken off from him, but abiding still in him, as in its natural Place: As Light doth in the Sun, flows forth from him by such an Emanation as divides it not; as Beams flow forth from the Sun and enlighten the Air, and yet are not cut off from it.

So then the second is like unto the first, because it springs from it, and depends on it, it commands the same

* *Minus enim te amat, qui aliquid præter te amat, & non propter te. Incipiat homo amare Deum, & non amabit in homine nisi Deum.* Aug.

same Affection; Love in the former placed on God, and in this extended from him to our Neighbour. And like in this too, that as the former is the Sum of the first Table, and so the first and great Commandment; so this is the Sum of the second Table, and therefore next unto it in Greatness and Importance.

All the Precepts that can be found in the Law and Prophets are reducible to these, and all Obedience depends upon this Love. *Ver. 40.* 1. Consider this, how those are the Sum of this Law. 2. Particularly in themselves.

Not only because it is Love facilitates all Obedience, and is the true Principle of it, that makes it both easy to us, and acceptable to God; but besides this, that Love disposes the Soul for all kind of Obedience, this very Act of Love is in effect all that is commanded in the Law. For the first laid to the first Table, it is so much one with the first Commandment, that it expresses most fitly the Positive of it, opposite to that which is there forbidden,

1 Com. “*Thou shalt have no other Gods before me, but*

“*thalt have me alone for thy God, or bestow all Divine Affection, and all Worship that is*

“*the Sign and Expression of it upon me only,*

2 Com. “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all*

“*thy Heart, &c.* And if thou lovest me

“*alone, thou wilt not decline to any kind of false*

“*Worship, that were to vitiate thy Affection, and*

“*to break that conjugal Love and Fidelity to which*

“*thou art bound by Covenant, being my People as*

“*by a spiritual Marriage.”* Therefore is Idolatry so frequently called, in the Phrase of the Prophets, *Adultery and Uncleanness*: And in the Letter of that Commandment, the Lord uses that Word, which in its usual Sense is conjugal, and relates to Marriage, *I am a jealous God*; and in the Close of that Precept expresseth particularly this Affection of Love, as particularly interests’d in it, though extended to all the rest, *I shew Mercy to Thousands of them that love me.*

It

Is it not a genuine Property of Love to honour and respect the Name of those whom we love, and therefore it is altogether inconsistent with the Love of God to vilify and abuse his Name. 3 Com.

They that understand the true Use of that holy Rest of the Sabbath-day, do know that it frees the Soul, and makes it vacant from earthly things for this Purpose, that it may fully apply itself to the Worship and Contemplation of God, and converse with him at greater length. 4 Com. Then certainly where there is this entire Love to God, this will not weigh heavy, will be no grievous Task to it, it will embrace and gladly obey this Commandment, not only as its Duty, but as its great Delight; for there is nothing that Love rejoices in more, than in the converse and Society of those on whom it is placed, would willingly bestow most of its time that Way, and thinks all Hours too short that are spent in that Society. Therefore not only they that profanely break, but they that keep it heavily and wearily, that find it rather a Burden than a Delight, may justly suspect that the Love of God is not in them; but he that keeps his Day chearfully, and loves it, because on it he may more liberally solace and refresh himself in God, may safely take it as an Evidence of his Love to God.

Now that after the same Manner the Love of our Neighbour is the Sum of the second Table; the Apostle St. Paul proves it for us clearly and briefly, *Rom. xiii. 9. 10.* All the Commandments touching our Neighbour are for guarding him from Evil and Injury. Now *Love worketh no ill to his Neighbour; therefore is the fulfilling of the Law.* He that truly loves his Neighbour as himself, will be as loth to wrong him as to wrong himself, either in that Honour and Respect that is due to him, or in his Life, or Chastity, or Goods or good Name, or to lodge so much as an unjust Desire or Thought, because that is the Beginning and Conception of real Injury. In a Word, the great Disorder and Crookedness of the corrupt

corrupt Heart of Man, consists in Self-love; it is the very Root of all Sin both against God and Man; for no Man commits any Offence, but it is some way to profit or please himself. It was a high Enormity of Self-love, that brought forth the very first Sin of Mankind; that was the Bait that took more than either the Colour or Taste of the Apple, that it was desirable for Knowledge; it was in that that the main Strength of the Temptation lay, *ye shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.* And was it not deep Self-love to affect that? And it is still thus, though we feel the miserable Fruits of that Tree: the same Self-love possesses us still, that to please our own Humour and Lusts, our Pride, or Covetousness, or Voluptuousness, we break the Law of God, the Law of Piety, and of Equity and Charity to Men. Therefore the Apostle, foretelling the Iniquities and Impieties of the last times, *Covetous, Boasters, &c. and Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God;* he sets that on the Front, as the chief leading Evil, and the Source of all the rest, *Lovers of their own selves;* Men shall be *Lovers of themselves, therefore covetous;* and *Lovers of themselves more than Lovers of God,* because *Lovers of their own selves,* 2 Tim. iii. 2. Therefore this is the Sum of that which God requires in his holy Law, the reforming of our Love, which is the commanding Passion of the Soul, and wheels all the rest about with it in Good or Evil.

And its Reformation is in this, recalling it from ourselves unto God, and reflecting it from God to our Brethren; loving ourselves sovereignly by corrupt Nature, we are Enemies to God, and Haters of him, and cannot love our Neighbours but only in Reference to ourselves, and so far as it profits or pleaseth us do so, and not in Order and Respect unto God: The highest and the true Redress of this Disorder, is that which we have here in these two Precepts as the Substance of all; first that all our Love ascend to God, and then what is due to Men descend from thence, and so passing that Way it is purified and

and refined, and is subordinate and conformed to our Love of him above all, which is the first and great Commandment.

Here we have the supream Object of Love, to whom it is due, *the Lord thy God*, and the Measure of it, which is indeed to know no Measure*, *with all thy Heart, all thy Soul, and all thy Mind*, (for which in *Deut. thy Strength*,) *Luke* hath both; the Difference is none, for all mean that the Soul, and all the Powers of it unite and combine themselves in their most intense and highest Strength to the Love of God, and that all the Workings of the Soul, and Actions of the whole Man be no other, but the Acting and Exercise of this Love.

He accounts nor accepts of nothing we can offer him, if we give not the Heart with it; and he will have none of that neither, unless he have it all: And it is a poor All when he have given it, for the great God to accept of. If one of us had the Affection of a hundred, yea of all the Men in the World, yet could he not love God answerable to his full Worth and Goodness: All the glorified Spirits, Angels, and Men, that are or shall be in their Perfections, loving him with the utmost Extent of their Souls, do not altogether make up so much Love as he deserves, yet he is pleased to require our Heart, and the Love we have to bestow on him; and though it is infinitely due of Debt, yet he will take it as a Gift, *My Son, give me thy Heart*.

Therefore the Soul that begins to offer itself to him, although over-whelmed with the Sense of its own Unworthiness, and the Meanness of its Love, yet may say, "Lord, I am ashamed of this Gift I
" bring thee, yet because thou callest for it, such as
" it is, here it is, the Heart and all the Love I have,
" I offer unto thee; and had I ten thousand times
" more, it should all be thine; as much as I can I
" love thee, and I desire to be able to love thee

" more;

* *Modus est nescire modum, subtilius ista distinguere facile est magis quàm solidum.*

“ more; although I am unworthy to be admitted to
 “ love, yet thou art most worthy to be loved by me,
 “ and besides thou dost allow, yea commandest me
 “ to love thee; my loving of thee adds nothing to
 “ thee, but it makes me happy; and though it be
 “ true, the Love and Heart I offer thee is infinitely
 “ too little for thee, yet there is nothing besides thee
 “ enough for it.”

The Lord, or Jehovah thy God.] There ly the two
 great Reasons of Love, τὸ ἀγαπῆτον and τὸ ἰδὸν, Je-
 hovah the Spring of Being and Goodness, infinitely
 lovely. All the Beauty and Excellencies of the Crea-
 tures are but a Drop of that Ocean. And *thy God*,
 to all of us the Author of our Life, and of all
 that we enjoy, that spread forth those Heavens that
 roll about us, and comfort us with their Light and
 Motions, and Influences; and established this Earth
 that sustains us; that furnisheth us with Food and
 Raiment, and in a Word (and it is the Apostle's)
 that gives us, ζῶν καὶ πνοὴ καὶ πάντα, *Life, and
 Breath, and all Things*; and to the Believer, his God
 in a nearer Propriety, by Redemption and peculiar
 Covenant. But our Misery is, the most of us do not
 study and consider him, what he is in himself and to
 us, and therefore do not love him, because we know
 him not.

And thy Neighbour as thyself.] If we will not con-
 fess nor suspect ourselves, how much we are wanting
 in the former, yet our manifest Defect in this will
 discover it, therefore the Apostle, *Rom. xiii.* and
Gal. v. speaks of this as all, because though inferior
 to the other, yet connected with it, and the surest
 Sign of it. For these live and dy together. The A-
 postle St. *John* is express in it, and gives those Hypo-
 crites the Lie plainly. *If any Man says he loves God,
 and hates his Brother, he is a Liar, &c.* We have
 no real Way of expressing our Love to God, but in
 our Converse with Men, and in the Works of Love
 towards them.

Certainly

Certainly that sweet Affection of Love to God, cannot consist with Malice and Bitterness of Spirit against our Brethren. No, it sweetens and calms the Soul, and makes it all Love every way.

As thyself.] As truly both wishing, and to thy Power procuring his Good, as thy own. Consider how much unwilling thou art to be injured or defamed, and have the same Thoughts for thy Brother, be as tender for him. But how few of us aspire to this Degree of Charity?

Thy very Enemies are not here excluded; if Self-love be still predominant in thee instead of the Love of God, then thou wilt make thine own Interest the Rule of thy Love; so when thou art, or conceivest thou art wronged by any, the Reason of thy Love ceaseth; but if thou love for God, that Reason abides still: "God hath commanded me to love my Enemies, and he gives me his Example, he does Good to the wicked that offend him."

And this is indeed a Trial of our Love to God: One hath marred thee, that gives thee to think that thou hast no Cause to love him for thyself; be it so, Self-love forbids thee, but the Love of God commands thee to love him. God says, "If thou lovest me, love him for my sake." And if thy Love to God be sincere, thou wilt be glad of the Occasion to give so good a Testimony of it, and find a Pleasure in that which others account so difficult and painful.

* *Amicus diligendus in Deo, & inimicus propter Deum.* Aug.

DISCOURSE

O N

HEBREWS VIII. 10.

For this is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those Days, saith the Lord; I will put my Laws into their Mind, and write them in their Hearts: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a People.

THE two great Evils that perplex sensible Minds, are the Guiltiness of Sin, and the Power of it; therefore this new Covenant hath in it two Promises opposite to these two Evils, free Pardon to remove the Guilt of Sin, and the subduing of its Power by the Law of God written in the Heart. Of this latter only for the present. Having spoke somewhat of the Sense of the Law in ten Commandments, and of the Sum of it in two, this remains to be considered as altogether necessary for Obedience, and without which all hearing and speaking, and all the Knowledge of it, will be fruitless; though it be made very clear and legible without, we shall only read it, and not at all keep it, unless it be likewise written within.

Observe, 1. The Agreement of the Law with the Gospel: The Gospel bears the compleat fulfilling of the Law, and satisfying its highest Exactness in our Surety Jesus Christ, so that way nothing is abated; but, besides in reference to us ourselves, though it take off the Rigour of it from us, because answered by another for us, yet it doth not abolish the

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Rule of the Law, but establisheth it. It is so far from tearing or blotting out the outward Copies of it, that it writes it anew, where it was not before, even within, sets it upon the Heart in sure and deep Characters. We see this Kind of writing of the Law is Promise for the Days of the Gospel, cited out of the Prophet *Jeremy*, &c.

There is indeed no such writing of the Law in us, or keeping of it by us, as will hold good for our Justification in the Sight of God, therefore that other Promise runs combined with it, the free Forgiveness of Iniquity. But again, there is no such Forgiveness as sets a Man free to Licentiousness and Contempt of God's Law, but on the contrary binds him more strongly to Obedience; therefore to that sweet Promise of the Pardon of Sin, is inseparably joined this other of inward writing of the Law. The Heart is not wash'd from the Guiltiness of Sin in the Blood of Christ, that it may wallow and defile itself again in the same Puddle, but it is therefore wash'd that the Tables or Leaves of it may be clean, for receiving the pure Characters of that Law of God, which is to be written on it.

Concerning this Writing there are three Things you may mark. 1. What it is. 2. What its Necessity. 3. Who it its Writer. The writing of the Law in the Heart, is briefly no other but the renewing and sanctifying of the Heart by the Infusion of Grace, which is a heavenly Light that gives the Soul to know God aright; and that is added here as the same with the Writing of the Law in the Heart, and an Illustration of it, *They shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest.* And this Light bringeth Heat with it*. That right Knowledge of God being in the Soul, begets in it Love to him; and Love is the same with the fulfilling of the whole Law: It takes up the whole Soul, *I will put it in their Mind, and write it in their Hearts.* If we will distinguish those, then it is, they shall both

* *Lux est vehiculum caloris.*

know it and love it, it shall not be written anew in their Heads, and go no deeper, but written in their Hearts; but we may well take both for the whole Soul, for this kind of Knowledge and Love are inseparable; and where the one is, the other cannot be wanting.

So then a supernatural sanctified Knowledge of God, is the Law of God written in the Heart; when it comes and entertains him as holy within it, then it hath not a dead Letter of the Law written in it, but *νόμον ἐμφύχον*, the Law-giver himself, his Name and Will is engraven on it throughout, on every part of it, all that they know of God shall not be by mere Report, and by the Voice of others, but they shall inwardly read and know him within themselves. Which (by the by) makes not the publick Teaching and Work of the Ministry superfluous to any, even to those that know most of God, but signifies only this, that all they that do indeed receive and believe the Gospel, are inwardly enlightened by the Spirit of God to understand the Things of God, and have not their Knowledge on bare Trust of others that instruct them, without any particular Persuasion and Light within; but what they hear of spiritual Things, they shall understand and know after a spiritual Manner. And the Universality of the Promise signifies, that this kind of Knowledge should be more frequently and more largely bestowed in the Days of the Gospel, than it was before.

2. The Necessity of writing the Law on the Heart. Although there be in the natural Conscience of Man some dim Character of the Law, convincing him of grosser Wickednesses, and leaving him inexcusable, of which the Apostle speaks, *Rom. ii. 15.* yet he is so far naturally from the right Knowledge of God, and the Love of his whole Law, that instead of that Knowledge, his Mind is full of Darkness, *Eph. iv. 18.* and contrary to that Love, his Heart is possess'd with a natural Enmity and Antipathy against the Law of

God, *Rom. viii. 7.* There is a Law within him, directly opposite, which the Apostle calls the *Law of Sin*, *Rom. vii. 23.* Sin ruling and commanding the Heart and whole Man, making Laws at its Pleasure*, and obtaining full Obedience. Therefore of Necessity, before a Man can be brought to obey the holy Law of God, the inward Frame of his Heart must be changed, the corrupt Law of Sin must be abrogate, *Rom. vi.* and the Soul renounce Obedience to it, and give itself up wholly, *ἑς τὸ πᾶν*, to receive the Stamp and Impression of the Law of God; and then having it written within upon his Heart, his Actions will bear the Resemblance, and be conform unto it.

In this Promise that God makes to his People, he hath Regard to the Nature of *A natura obedientia.* that Obedience that he requires, because he will have it sincere and cordial, therefore he puts a living Principle of it within, writes his Law in the Heart, and then it is in the Words and Actions derived from thence, and is more in the Heart than in them: The first Copy is in the Heart, and all the other Powers and Parts of a Man follow that, and so by that means, as it is sincere, so it is universal. The Heart is that which commands all the rest: And as the vital Spirits flow from it to the whole Body; thus the Law of God, being written in it, is diffused through the whole Man: It might be in the Memory or in the Tongue, and not in the rest; but put it in the Heart, and then it is undoubtedly in all.

Being written in the Heart makes the Obedience likewise universal in the Object (as they speak) to the whole Law of God. When it is written only without a Man, he may read one Part and pass over another, may possibly chuse to conform to some Part of the Law, and leave the rest; but when the full Copy of it is written in his Heart, then it is all one Law: And as in itself it is inseparable, as *St. James* teacheth us, so it is likewise in his Esteem and Affec-

* *Tolerabis iniquas interius leges.* Claud.

tion and Endeavour of Obedience; he hath Regard unto all the Commandments as one, because of his Love to the Law of God, he hates not only some, but every false Way, as *David* speaks. He that looks on the Law without him, will possibly forbear to break it while others look upon him, his Obedience lies much in the Beholder's Eye; but he that hath the Law written within, cannot chuse but regard it as much in secret as in publick, although his Sin might be hid from the Knowledge and Censure of Men, yet still it were Violence done to that pure Law that is within his Breast, and therefore he hates it alike, as if it were publick. This is the constant Enemy of all Sin, this Law within him, *I have hid thy Law in my Heart*, says *David*, *that I might not sin against thee*, and makes a Man abate nothing of his Course of Obedience and Holiness because unseen, but like the Sun that keeps on its Motion when it is clouded from our Eyes, as well as when we see it.

In a Word, this Writing of the Law in the Heart makes Obedience a natural Motion, I mean by a new Nature; it springs not from outward Constraints and Respects, but from an inward Principle, and therefore not only is it universal and constant, but chearful and easy. The Law only written in Tables of Stone is hard and grievous; but make once the Heart the Table of it, and then there is nothing more pleasing. This Law of God makes Service delightful even the painfulest of it, *Psal xl. 8.* The Sun that moves with such wonderful Swiftnes, that to the ignorant it would seem incredible to hear how many thousands of Miles it goes each Hour; yet because it is naturally fitted for that Course, it comes, as the Psalmist speaks, *like a Bridegroom forth of his Chamber, and rejoices as a strong Man to run a Race.* If the natural Man be convinced of the Goodness and Equity of the Law of God, yet because it is not written within, but only commands without, it is a violent Motion to him to obey it, and therefore he finds it a

painful Yoke. But hear *David*, in whose Heart it was, speak of it, how often doth he call it his *Delight* and his *Joy*?

If any profane Persons object to a godly Man his exact Life, that it is too precise, as if he writ each Action before he do it? he may answer, as *Demosthenes* to him that objected he wrote his Orations before he spake them. That he was not at all ashamed of that, although they were not only written, but engraven before-hand. Certainly the godly Man lives by this Law that is written and engraven on his Heart, and needs not be ashamed of it.

It is true, the renewed Man, even he that hath this Law deepest written in his Heart, yet while he lives here, is still molested with that inbred Antinomian, that Law of Sin that yet dwells in his Flesh; though the Force and Power of it is broken, and its Laws repealed in his Conversion, and this new pure Law placed in its Stead: Yet because that Part which is Flesh in him still entertains and harbours it, where it creates and breeds a Christian daily Vexation, because Sin hath lost Dominion, it is still practising Rebellion against that spiritual Kingdom and Law that is established in the regenerate Mind: As a Man that hath once been in Possession of Rule, though usurped, yet being subdued, he is still *working* in that Kingdom to turbulent Practices. But though by this (as the Apostle was, *Rom. vii. 4.*) every godly Man is often driven to sad Perplexities and Complaints, yet in this is his Comfort, that Law of his God written there hath his Heart and Affection, Sin is dethroned and thrust out of his Heart, and hath only an usurped Abode within him against his Will, he sides with the Law of God, and fights with all his Power for it against the other; that holy Law is his Delight, and this Law of Sin has greatest Grief.

3. *I will write*] The Lord promises himself to do this, and it is indeed his Prerogative; he wrote it at first on Tables of Stone, and this spiritual engraving it on the Heart is much more his peculiar. Other

Men

Men might afterwards engrave it on Stone, but no Man can at all write it on the Heart, not upon his own, much less upon another's. Upon his own he cannot, for it is naturally taken up and possess'd with that contrary Law of Sin, (as we said before) and is willingly subject to it, loves that Law, and therefore in that Posture, it neither can nor will work this Change upon itself, to dispossess that Law which it loves, and bring in that which it hates. No Man can write this Law on the Heart of another, for it is inaccessible, his Hand cannot reach it, he cannot come at it, how then should he write any thing on it? Men in the Ministry of the Word can but stand and call without, they cannot speak to within, far less write any thing within. Though they speak never so excellently and spiritually, and express no other but what is written on their own Hearts, and certainly that is the most powerful way of speaking, and the likeliest for making Impression on the Heart of another; yet unless the Hand of God's own Spirit carry it into the Hearer's Heart, and set on the Stamp of it there, it will perish as a Sound in the Air, and effect nothing. *Sonus verborum nostrorum aures percutit, magister intus. Nolite putare quenquam hominem aliquid discere ab alio homine, admonere possumus per strepitum vocis nostræ, si non est intus qui doceat, inanis strepitus est noster.* Aug. in 1 Jo. Tr. 3. Let this ever be acknowledged to his Glory; the Voice of Men may beat the Ear, but only he that made the Heart can work upon it, and change and mould it as it pleaseth him: This is his own Promise, and he alone makes it good. He writes his Law on the Hearts of his Children, and by this Work of his Grace prepares them for Glory; they that have this Law written in their Hearts, their Names are certainly written in the Book of Life.

Short Catechism.

Question. WHAT is naturally every Man's chief Desire?

Answer. To be happy.

Q. Which is the Way to true Happiness?

A. True Religion.

Q. What is true Religion?

A. The true and lively Knowledge of the only true God, and of him whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ.

Q. Whence is this Knowledge to be learned?

A. All the Works of God declare his Being and his Glory; but the clearer Knowledge of himself, and his Son Jesus Christ, is to be learned from his own Word, contained in the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Q. What do those Scriptures teach us concerning God?

A. That he is one Infinite, Eternal Spirit, most Wise, and Holy, and Just, and Merciful, and the All-powerful Maker and Ruler of the World.

Q. What do they further teach us concerning him?

A. That he is Three in One, and one in Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Q. What will that lively Knowledge of God effectually work in us?

A. It will cause us to believe in him, and to love him above all Things, even above ourselves to adore and worship him, to pray to him, and to praise him and exalt him with all our Might, and to yield up ourselves to the Obedience of all his Commandments, as having both made us, and made himself known to us for that very End.

Rehearse then the Articles of our Belief.

I believe in God the Father, &c.

Rehearse the Ten Commandments of the Law, which

which are the Rule of our Obedience, and so the Trial of our Love.

A. God spake these Words, I am the Lord thy God, &c.

Q. What is the Summary our Saviour hath given us of this Law?

A. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thyself.

Q. What is the effectual Means of obtaining Increase of Faith and Power to obey, and generally all Graces and Blessings at the Hand of God?

A. Prayer.

Rehearse that most excellent and perfect Prayer that our Saviour hath taught us.

A. Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

Q. In what Estate was Man created?

A. After the Image of God in Holiness and Righteousness.

Q. Did he continue in that Estate?

A. No. But by breaking the Commandment which his Maker gave him, eating of the Fruit of that Tree which was forbidden him, he made himself and his whole Posterity subject to Sin and Death.

Q. Hath God left Man in this Misery, without all Means and Hopes of Recovery?

A. No. For he so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.

Q. What is then the great Doctrine of the Gospel?

A. That same coming of the Son of God in the Flesh, and giving himself to the Death of the Cross to take away the Sin of the World, and his rising again from the Dead, and ascending into Glory.

Q. What doth that Gospel mainly teach and really persuade all the Followers of it to do?

A. It teacheth them to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present World.

Q. How

Q. How hath our Lord Jesus himself expressed the great and necessary Duty of all his Disciples?

A. That they deny themselves, and take up their Cross and follow him.

Q. Rehearse then some of the chief Points wherein we are to follow our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. 1. To surrender ourselves wholly to our heavenly Father, and his good Pleasure in all Things, even in the sharpest Afflictions and Sufferings; and not at all to do our own Will, or design our own Praise or Advantage, but in all Things to do his Will and intend his Glory.

2. To be spotless, and chaste, and holy, in our whole Conversation.

3. Add a third. To be meek and lowly, not to slander or reproach, to mock or despise any; and if any do so to us, to bear it patiently, yea to rejoice in it.

4. A fourth. Unfeignedly to love our Christian Brethren, and to be charitably and kindly affected toward all Men, even to our Enemies, forgiving them, yea and praying for them, and returning them Good for Evil; to comfort the Afflicted, and relieve the Poor, and to do good for all as we are able.

Q. Is it necessary that all Christians live according to these Rules?

A. So absolutely necessary, that they that do not so in some good measure, whatsoever they profess, do not really believe in Jesus Christ, nor have any Portion in him.

Q. What visible Seals hath our Saviour annexed to that Gospel, to confirm our Faith, and to convey the Grace of it to us?

A. The two Sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. What doth Baptism signify and seal?

A. Our washing from Sin, and our new Birth in Jesus Christ.

Q. What doth the Lord's Supper signify and seal?

A. Our spiritual Nourishment and Growth in him,
and

and transforming us more and more into his Likeness, by commemorating his Death, and feeding on his Body and Blood, under the Figures of Bread and Wine.

Q. What is required to make fit and worthy Communicants of the Lord's Supper?

A. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and Repentance towards God, and Charity towards all Men.

Q. What is Faith in our Lord Jesus?

A. It is the Grace by which we both believe his whole Doctrine, and trust in him as the Redeemer and Saviour of the World, and entirely deliver up ourselves to him, to be taught and saved and ruled by him, as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

Q. What is a Repentance?

A. It is a godly Sorrow for Sin, and a hearty and real turning from all Sin unto God.

Q. What is the final Portion of unbelieving and unrepentant Sinners?

A. The everlasting Torments of Devils.

Q. What is the final Portion of them that truly repent and believe, and obey the Gospel?

A. The blessed Life of Angels, in the Vision of God for ever.

A Question for young Persons before their first Admission to the Lord's Supper.

Q. Whereas you were in your Infancy baptized into the Name of Jesus Christ, do you now upon distinct Knowledge, and with firm Belief and pious Affection, own that Christian Faith of which you have given an Account, and withal your Baptismal Vow of renouncing the Service of Satan, and the World, and the Lusts of the Flesh, and of devoting yourself to God in all Holiness of Life?

A. I do sincerely and heartily declare my Belief of that Faith, and own my Engagement to that holy Vow, and resolve, by the Assistance of God's Grace, to continue in the careful Observance of it all my Days.

Ten

Ten Sermons never before published.

S E R M O N I.

ROMANS XIII. 11, 12, 13, 14.

And that, knowing the Time, that now it is high Time to awake out of Sleep; for now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed.

The Night is far spent, the Day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the Works of Darkness, and let us put on the Armour of Light.

Let us walk honestly as in the Day; not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in Strife and Envy.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof.

THE highest Beauty of the Soul, the very Image of God upon it, is Holiness: He that is aspiring to it himself, is upon a most excellent Design; and if he can do any thing to excite, and call up others to it, performs a Work of the greatest Charity.

This Paul doth frequently and pressingly in his Writings. This Epistle, as it doth admirably clear the Doctrine of *Justification*, it doth no less earnestly urge the Doctrine of *Sanctification*: That one Sentence about the Middle thereof does excellently unite them; and so is the Summary of all that goes before, and all that follows, (*There is therefore now no Condemnation, &c. Chap. viii. 1.*

The present Words are as an Alarm, or Morning Watch Bell, of singular Use, not only awaking a Christian to his Day's Work, but withal minding him what it is; and these two shall be all our Division of them. 1st, Our *Awaking* founded. 2d, Our *Walking* directed. The former, *Ver. 11, 12.* tells us, it is Time to rise, and calls us up to put on our Cloaths, and, being Soldiers, our Arms. The latter, *Ver. 13.* directeth our Behaviour and Employment throughout the Day. The last Verse doth shortly, and that fully and clearly, fold up both together. We shall take the Words just as they ly.

And that knowing the Time.] This imports much in all Actions, and here it is the *καίρον.* Apostle's great Argument: Now it is unfit to sleep, *knowing the Time*; however it might have been before, now it is very unseasonable and unsuitable, that you ly snorting as at Midnight. Do you know what o' Clock it is? (*νῦν ὥρα*) It is Time to rise; it is Morning, the Day begins to appear.

Observation. All the Days of sinful Nature are dark Night, in which there is no right discerning of spiritual Things: Some Light there is of Reason, to direct natural and civil Actions, but no Day-light till the Sun arise. 'Tis Night still for all the Stars, and the Moon to help them: Notwithstanding natural Speculations, that are more remote, and all Prudence and Policy for Affairs, that come somewhat nearer to Action, yet we are still in the Night, and you do think that a sad Life; but the Truth is, we sleep on in it, and our Heads are still full o' new Dreams that keep us sleeping. We are constantly drunk with Cares or Desires of Sense, and so our Sleep continues. Sometimes it is called *Death, dead in Sins, &c.* Now, Sleep is Brother to Death; and so by it not unfitly is the same State resembled: No spiritual Life we have at all, and therefore in that Sense are truly dead. But because there is in us a natural Life, and in that a Capacity of spiritual Life, therefore we are said to be asleep. As in a dead Sleep, our Soul is bound

bound up and drowned in Flesh, a Surcharge of the Vapours of gross sensible Things that we glut ourselves withal, and the Condition of our wisest Thoughts, in relation to our highest Good, are nothing but Dreams and Reveries. Your Projectings, and Bargainings, and Buildings, these be a better Sort of Dreams; but your Envyings, and mutual Despisings and Discontents, your detracting and evil-speaking, these are more impertinent, and to yourselves more perplexing: And your sweetest Enjoyments in this Life, that you think most real, are but Shadows of Delight, a more pleasant Sort of Dreams. All Pumps and royal Solemnities, the Scripture calls *phantasias*. *Ast. xiv. 23.* A Man will not readily think so, while he is in them, *Somnium narrare vigilantis est*; we do not perceive the Vanity of our Dreams, and know that they are so, and declare them to be so, till we be awaked. Sometimes in a Dream a Man will have such a Thought that it is but a Dream, yet doth he not thoroughly see the Folly thereof, but goes on in it. Some natural Men have sometimes a Glance of such Thoughts, that all these Things he is rather turmoiling or delighting in are Vanity, and nothing to the Purpose, yet he awakes not, but raves on still in them; he shifts a little, turns on his Bed as a Door on its Hinges, but turns not off, does not rise.

But the spiritual-minded Christian, that is indeed awake, and looks back on his former Thoughts and Ways, O how does he disdain himself, and all his former high Fancies that he was most pleased with, finding them Dreams! O what a Fool, what a Wretch was I, while my Head was full of such Stuff, building Castles in the Air, imagining and catching at such Gains, and such Preferments, and Pleasures, and either they still running before me, and I could not overtake them, or if I thought I did, what have I now, when I see what it is, and find that I have embraced a Shadow, false Hopes, and Fears, and Joys?

He thinks he hath eat, and his Soul is empty, Isa. xxix.

And

And you that will sleep on, may; but sure I am, when you come to your Death-bed, if possibly you awake then, then shall you look-back, with sad Repent, upon whatsoever you most esteemed, and gloried in, under the Sun. While they are coming towards you, they have some Shew; but, as a Dream that is past, when these gay Things are flown by, then we see how vain they are.

As that luxurious King caused paint on his Tomb two Fingers, as sounding one upon another, with that Word, *All is not worth so much, Non tanti est.* I know not how Men make a shift to satisfy themselves; but, take a sober and awakened Christian, and set him in the Midst of the best of all Things that are here, his Heart would burst with Despair of Satisfaction, were it not for a Hope that he hath, beyond all that this poor World either attains, or is seeking after; and that Hope is indeed the Dawning of the Day that is here spoken of.

It is Time to awake, says he, *Salvation is nearer than when ye believed.* That bright Day you look for is hasting forward; it is nearer than when you began to believe; the Night is far spent, the gross Darkness is already past, some Day-light it is, and is every Moment growing, and the perfect full Morning light of it is very near.

Obs. Grace, and the Gospel that works it, compared with the dark Night of Nature, is the Day, and it is often so called: The Apostle here calls it so, *Let us walk honestly as in the Day.* But yet that same Light of the Gospel shining to us in the Word, and within us by the Spirit, is but the Appearance or Approaching of the Day, a certain Pledge of it, yea a kind of Beginning of it, telling us that it is hard at hand. It is one and the same Light, and where it enters into any Soul, it makes sure that eternal full Day to it, that it shall not be disappointed of, more than the Day can go back, and the Sun fail to rise when the Dawning is begun: And this begun Light is still growing clearer, and tending to the perfect

Day, *Prov. iv. 18.* And at the first Peep or Appearance of it, so much it is, that the Soul is called to awake and arise, and put on Day-Cloaths, and apply itself to the Actions of the Day; and that is the Thing the Apostle here presses by it.

O the blessed Gospel, revealing God in Christ, and calling up Sinners to Communion with him, dispelling that black Night of Ignorance and accursed Darkness that otherwise had never ended, but passed on to an endless Night of eternal Misery! Says not *Zacharias* with good Reason in his Song, *Luke i.* that it was through the tender Mercy of God that this Day-spring from on high did visit us?

Now, says the Apostle, *this Day appearing, it is Time to awake*; and the longer since it began to appear, and the clearer the Light grows, the more high Time is it to awake and rise, and cast off Night-cloaths and Night-works, *Works of Darkness*, and to put on Garments, yea *Armour of Light*. He that is a Soldier, his Garments are not on, till his Arms be on, and his Sword about him, then he is ready; especially in a Time and Posture of War, and the Enemy lying nigh, even round about him; and this is every Christian's State while he is here. An *Armour of Light*, not only strong and useful, but comely and graceful, fit to walk abroad in; bright shining Armour; as your old Poets describe their Champions, dazling their Enemies Eyes.

And thus apparelled, to behave ourselves suitably, to *walk honestly as in the Day, not in Rioting and Drunkenness*: That is a Night-work, as the Apostle hath it, *1 Thess. v.* To stagger and reel in the Streets in Day-light, to be drunk in the Morning, is most shameful, so is that Spirit of Drunkenness as unbecoming a Christian; to see them hurrying and justling one another, as drunk with Love of earthly Things, and their Spirits by that besotted and unfitted for spiritual Things, that they find no Pleasure in them.

Chambering and Wantonness.] All impure lascivious Conversation, how vile are these, and unfit for the Light:

Light: Even Nature is ashamed to be seen in these Things, in the natural Light of the Day; much more will Grace in the spiritual Light of the Gospel,

Strife and Envy.] As Shuffles and hot Quarrels are most of all unseemly in the Streets in Day-light, so the Quarrels and Jarrings of Christians are very shameful before the Light wherein they walk. The Gospel of Christ, the grand Doctrine thereof, is Meekness and Love. But, O where are they, these Graces that so abound in the Doctrine of Christianity and yet are so scarce in the Lives of Christians? Where are they that look gladly on the Good of others, and bear Evils and Injuries from their Neighbours patiently, and repay Evil with Good? Thus it ought to be; but, on the contrary, how ready are the most to part on the least Occasions, to bite and snarl at each other? more still of the Spirit of the Dragon than of the Dove. My Brethren, remember and consider that the Gospel Light shines amongst us, and that more clearly than in former Times, and more clearly than to most People in the World in these Times, and do not outface and affront the blessed Light with the accursed Works of Darkness; you might have been prophane in former Times, or in some other Place, at a cheaper Rate.

Know, that if this glorious Light do not break off your Course of Sin, it will increase your Load of Judgment; the heaviest of all Condemnations, is to live in Darkness, and to live and dy in it, in the Midst of Light. Amongst all your desperate accursed Wishes, this shall be one, and a chief one, that either the Son of God had never come into the World, or that you had never heard of him.

Much of that we aim at were gained, if Christians could be brought to consider who they are, and walk like themselves, it would raise them above the base Pleasures of Sin, and Snares of the World. *The Way of Life is on high to the just*: There is a holy Loftiness, a Disdain of all impure sordid Ways. It is said of *Jeheshaphat*, that *his Heart was lift up in the Ways*

of the Lord, 2 Chron. xvii. 5. As a vain self-conceited Lifting up of the Heart is the great Enemy of our Welfare, as it is written of another, even of a good King, (*Hezekiah*) that *his Heart was lift up, therefore was Wrath upon him*; so there is a happy Exaltation of the Heart, where it is raised in God, to despise all Communion with the Unholy, and unholy Ways of the World. This, my Brethren, is that I would, were wrought in you by the Consideration of our holy Calling. We are called to Holiness, and not to Uncleaness. *Ye are the Children of the Light and of the Day*: Base Night Ways, such as cannot endure the Light, do not become you. O that Comeliness, that the Saints should study, that *Decorum* they should keep in all their Ways, *ἑσχατισμὸς*, one Action like another. and all-like Christ, living as in the Light. They that converse with the best Company, such Persons are obliged to more Decency in Apparel. We live in the Light, in the Company of Angels, of God, of Jesus Christ; and therefore should not act any thing that is low or mean, unbecoming the Rank we keep, and the Presence of those we frequent. When the King passes through the Country in Progress, they that see him seldom, being either to attend him in his Way, or to receive him into their Houses, will labour to have all Things in the best Order they can for the Time; but they that live at Court, and are daily in the King's Presence, are constantly Court-like in their Habit and Carriage, and all about them. O *Followers of the Lamb*, let your *Garments* be always *white*, yea, let him be your Garment; cloath yourselves with himself; have your Robes made of his spotless Fleece.

Ver. 11. *Put on the Lord Jesus.*] No Resemblance is more usual than that of Peoples Customs to their Cloaths, their Habitudes to their Habits: This the Apostle used in the foregoing Words, *Put on the* [Furniture or] *Armour of Light*, having cast off the *Works*, as Cloaths of Darkneſs, Night-cloaths; and the Word, *walking decently*, has something of the same

same Resemblance contained in it: And here we have the proper Beauty and Ornament of Christians, even the Lord Jesus recommended to them under the same Notion, *Put on, &c.* Him we put on by Faith, and are cloathed with him as our Righteousness. We come unto our Father, in our elder Brother's perfumed Garments, and so obtain the Blessing, which he, in a manner, was stripped of for our Sakes, did undergo the Curse, and was made a Curse for our Sakes: So the Apostle speaks of him; we *put him on*, as *The Lord our Righteousness*, and are made *the Righteousness of God in him*. This Investiture is first, when our Persons are made acceptable, and we come into Court. But there is another *putting of him on*, in the Conformity of Holiness, which always accompanies the former, and that is it which is here meant. And this I declare unto you, that whosoever does not thus *put him on*, shall find themselves deceived in the other, if they imagine it belongs to them.

They that are the Sons of God, and have the Hope of inheriting with him, do really become like him, even Heirs in some Degree, 1 *Job* iii. 3. and that blessed Expectation we have, is to be fully *like him*. *When he appears, we shall be like him*, saith the Apostle; and in the mean while are endeavouring to be so, and somewhat *attaining it*, as he adds, *Every one that hath this Hope, purifieth himself, as he is pure*. He is the only begotten Son; and we are so restored in him to the Dignity of Sons, that withal we are really changed into his Likeness: He is the *Image of the Father* that is renewed upon us.

It is the Substance of Religion, to be like him whom we worship*. Man's End and Perfection is *Likeness to God*. But, Oh! the Distance, *Pythagoras*, the Unlikeness, yea, the Contrariety, that is fallen upon our Nature; *the carnal Mind is Enmity to God*, the Soul, as it were, become Flesh, and so most unsuitable to the Father of Spirits, it is become like the Beast that perishes. Now, to repair and raise

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* *Summa religionis imitari quem colis.*

us, this was the Course taken: We could not rise up to God; he came down to us, yea, unto us, to raise and draw us up again to him. He became like us, that we might become like him. God first put on Man, that Man might put on God. Putting on the Lord Jesus, we put on Man, but that Man is God; and so, in putting on Man, we put on God. Thus, putting on Christ, we put on all Grace: This, not only by studying him as our Copy and Example, but by real Participation of his Spirit; and that so as that daily the Likeness is growing, while we are carried by that Spirit to study his Example, and enabled in some measure to conform to it; so that these two go together, *growing in Grace*, and in *the Knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is the *Armour of Light* before spoken of; all our Ornament and Safety is in him. Some Pictures of great Persons you have seen, with Arms and Robes on at once; thus we, when cloathed with Christ, have our Arms and Robes both on at once, yea, both in one, for he is both. So this is the great Study of a Christian, to eye and read Christ much, and, by looking on him, to become more and more like him, making the Impression deeper by each Day's Meditation, and beholding of him; his Spirit in us, and that Love his Spirit works, making the Work easy, as Sympathies do: And still the more the Change is wrought, it becomes still the more easy to work it; this is excellently described by this Apostle, *2 Cor. iii. 18.*

Now we see our Business: O that we had Hearts to it! 'Tis high, 'tis sweet, to be growing more and more Christ-like every Day. What is the Purchase or Conquest of Kingdoms to this? O! what are we doing, that mind not this more, even they whose proper Work it is? How remiss are they in it, and what small Progress do they make? Are we less for the World and ourselves, and more for God this Year than the former, more meek and gentle, abler to bear Wrongs, and do Good for them, more holy and spiritual in our Thoughts and Ways, more abundant and

and fervent in Prayer? I know there will be Times of Deadness and Winter Seasons, even in the Souls of living Christians; but it is not always so, it will come about yet: So that, take the whole Course of a Christian together, he is advancing, putting on still more of Christ, and living in him. There is a closer Union betwixt the Soul, and this its spiritual Cloathing, than betwixt the Body and its Garments; that doth import a Transchange into Christ, put on as a new Life, or new Self. The Christian by Faith doth this, he puts off himself, old carnal Self, and instead thereof puts on Jesus Christ, and thenceforward hath no more Regard of that old Self, than of old cast Cloaths, but is all for Christ, joys in nothing else. This is a Mystery which cannot be understood but by partaking of it.

My Brethren, Learn to have these Thoughts frequent and occurrent with you on all Occasions. Think, when about any thing, how would Christ behave himself in this, even so let me endeavour.

You will possibly say, They that speak thus, and advise us, do not do thus. O! that that were not too true; yet there be some that are real in it, and although it be but little that is attained, yet the very Aim is excellent, and somewhat there is that is done by it. It is better to have such Thoughts and Desires, than altogether to give it up; and the very Desire, being serious and sincere, does so much change the Habitude and Usage of the Soul and Life, that it is not to be despised.

Now follows, *And make no Provision for the Flesh*, &c. and it will follow necessarily. We hear much to little Purpose. O! to have the Heart touched by the Spirit with such a Word as is here, it would unty it from all these Things. These are the Words, the very reading of which wrought so with *Augustin*, that, of a licentious young Man, he turned a holy faithful Servant of Jesus Christ. While you were without Christ, you had no higher nor other Business to do, but to attend and serve the Flesh; but

once having put him on, you are other Men, and other Manners do become you, *Alia ætas alios mores postulat.*

This forbids not eating and drinking and cloathing, and providing for these, nor Decency and Comeliness in them: The *putting on of Christ* does not bar the sober Use of them; yea, the moderate providing for the Necessities of the Flesh, while thou art tied to dwell in it, that may be done in such a Way as shall be a part of thy Obedience and Service to God; but to lay in Provisions for the Lusts of it, is to victual and furnish his Enemy and thine own: For the Lusts of the Flesh do strive against God's Spirit, and war against thy Soul, *Gal. v. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 11.*

This was the Quarrel betwixt God and his own People in the Wilderness: Bread for their Necessities he gave them, but they required Bread for their Lusts, (which should rather been starved to Death than fed) and many of them fell in the Quarrel: He gave them their Desire, but gave them a Plague with it, and they died with the Meat between their Teeth. Many that seem to follow God, and to have put on Christ, yet continuing in League with their Lusts, and providing for them, they are permitted a while so to do, and are not withheld from their Desire, and seem to prosper in the Business; but though not so sudden and sensible as that of the *Israelites*, there is no less certain a Curse joined with all they purchase, and provide for that unhallowed Use. 'Tis certainly the Posture and Employment of most of us, even that are called *Christians*, to be Purveyors for the Flesh, even for the Lusts of it †; these Lusts comprehending all sensual and all worldly Flesh self pleasing Projects, even some Things that seem a little more decent and refined, come under this Account. What are Men commonly doing, but projecting and labouring beyond Necessity, for fuller and finer Provision for *Back and Belly*, and to feed their Pride, and raise themselves and theirs somewhat above the Condition

† *Ad supervacuum sudare.*

dition of others about them; And where Mens Interests meet in the Teeth, and cross each other, there arise Heart-burnings and Debates, and an evil Eye, one against another, even on a fancied Prejudice, where there is nothing but crossing an Humour: So the grand Idol is their own Will that must be provided for, and served in all Things, that takes them up early and late, how they may be at Ease, and pleased, and esteemed and honoured. This is the *Provision for the Flesh and its Lusts*; and from this are all they called that have *put on Christ*, not to a hard, mean, unpleasant Life, instead of that other, but to a far more high and more truly pleasant Life, that disgraces all those their former Pursuits that they thought so gay, while they knew no better. There is a transcendent Sweetness in Christ, that puts the Flesh out of Credit. *Put on Christ*, thy Robe Royal, and *make no Provision*, &c. and sure thou wilt not then go and turmoil in the Kitchen. A Soul cloathed with Christ, stooping to any sinful Delight, or an ardent Pursuit of any thing earthly, though lawful, doth wonderfully indignify itself: Methinks it is as a King's Son in his princely Apparel, playing the Scullion, sitting down to turn the Spits. A Soul living in Christ indeed hath no Vacancy for the superfluous luxurious Demands of Flesh, yea, supplies the very Necessities of it with a kind of Regret, *A necessitatibus meis libera me, Domine*, said one.

Oh! raise up your Spirits, you that pretend to any thing in Christ, delight in him, and let his Love satisfy you at all Times. What need you go a begging elsewhere? All you would add makes you the poorer, abates so much of your Enjoyment of him; and what can compensate that? *Put on the Lord Jesus* and then view yourselves, and see if you be fit to be Slaves to Flesh and Earth.

These two, *Put on the Lord Jesus*, and, *Make no Provision*, are directly the Representation of the Church, *Apoc. xii.* A Woman cloathed with the Sun, and the Moon under her Feet, needed borrow

ne Beauty from it, or any thing under it. She left the Scarlet, and the Purple, and Gold to the Harlot, after Spoken of, for her Dressing.

The Service of the Flesh is a Work the Christian cannot fold to, till he forget what Cloaths he has on. This is all, my Brethren, Oh! that we could be persuaded once to *put on Christ*, and then resolve and remember to do nothing unbecoming that Attire.

S E R M O N II.

P S A L. CVII. 43.

Whoso is wise, and will observe those Things, even they shall understand the loving Kindness of the Lord.

MOST Men live a brutal sensitive Life, live not so much as the Life of Reason; but far fewer the Divine Life of Faith, which is further above common human Reason than that is above Sense. The spiritual Light of Grace is that which makes Day in the Soul; all other Wisdom is but Night-light, *Then I saw that Wisdom excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth Darknes*, Eccl. ii. 13. This higher Sort of Knowledge is that the Prophet speaks of.

Having discoursed excellently through the Psalm, of the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God, so legible in his Providence towards Men, and often called up the dull Minds of Men to consider these his Works, and bless him for them, he closes with this Applaudment of their Happiness that truly do so, *Whoso is wise, &c.*

They that spake it, know not how true their Speech is, that have called the World *a Nest of Fools*. 'Tis true, there is very little, even of natural Clearness of Judgment amongst Men, but sure far less of this

this true Spiritual Wisdom; so that, if we read this as a Question, *Whoso is wise?* Oh! how few, and yet most imagine they are, few convinced they are Fools, and that is the Height of their Folly. That Word is most true, *Job xi. 12. Vain Man would be wise, though he be born as the wild Ass's Colt.* In Youth he runs wild, unbroken and unuseful, and in fuller Age hath but a brutish slavish Life, yokes in with his Beasts, in the same kind of Labour, or in little better; turmoiling and drudging to serve his base Lusts, his Gain, his Pleasure, and forgets quite what high Condition the Soul that sparkles within him is born to, and made capable of; in a Word, knows not God. That is both his Folly and Misery. How much passes, e're we consider what we live for? And though all applied, how incapable are a great many to know any thing? To this purpose there is a notable Word, *Job. xi. 8, 9.*

Now, to stir up your Desires and Endeavours after this Wisdom; consider, that it is the proper Excellency of the rational Nature, the true Elevation of human Nature, to be wise: And they that are not such, or know somewhat of their own Defect, yet would willingly pass for such, and had rather be accounted uncomely, yea, even dishonest, than unwise, (call a Man any thing rather than a Fool;) but yet, if they could, would rather have the Thing than the Reputation of it, and desire really to be wise, if it were in their Power.

Now, it were good to work on this Design within us, and to have it drawn into the right Channel. Would you be wise, then seek true Wisdom. The most that Men seek and admire in themselves and others, are but false Shadows and Appearances of Wisdom; Knowledge either of base low Things, as to scrape and gather together, or else of vain, unprofitable Things, and that Knowledge that is for the most part but imaginary: For most Things in State-Affairs take another Bias and Course, are not so much

* *Inter homines quid homine varius?*

much modelled by Wit, as most Men imagine; and for the Secrets of Nature, we have little certain Knowledge of them; how short is our Life to attain any Knowledge? (that is an excellent Word, *Job* viii. 9.) but the Knowledge here set before us, is the best kind of Knowledge, of the highest Things, Divine Things: I say, the best kind of Knowledge of them; for there are Notions, even of these Things, that have little in them, either curious fruitless Disputations of such Points as are most removed both from our Notice and our Use, or an useless Knowledge of useful Things; But this is a well-regulated and sure-footed Knowledge of Divine Things, as God himself hath revealed them.

This Wisdom descends from above; therefore, for the Attainment of it, these two are necessary, 1st, To know that we want it, sensibly and feelingly to know this, that we know nothing of the Things of God. *Multi ad sapientiam pervenirent, nisi se jamjam pervenisse arbitrarentur.* Many Men would have attained to Wisdom, if they had not fancied or imagined that they had already attained to it. I speak not now of the lowest Sort, the grossly, the brutishly ignorant, even of the Letter of Divine Truths, but such as can give themselves or others, if put to it, a good Account of the Principles of Faith and Holiness, have read and heard much, and possibly learned and retained not a little that Way, yet still are but Ignorants, Strangers to this heavenly Wisdom: Therefore Men must first know this, that they may go new to School again and become as little Children, *1 Cor.* iii. 19. Wisdom invites no other, *Prov.* ix. 4. The *strange Woman*, and so all the Inticements to Sin, they invite the same Persons, *Ver.* 16. but to a direct opposite End: She calls the Fools to befool them, to drown them in Folly and Wretchedness; but Wisdom calls them, to un-befool them, to recover them, and teach them the Way of Life.

2^{dly}, Being

2dly, Being convinced and sensible of the Want of it, to use the right Way to attain it, to give all diligent Attendance on the Word and Ordinances of God, to desire it of him. Desire is all: If you desire much, you shall have much. Vent thy Desire this Way Heavenwards, whence this Wisdom descends, this Light springs from on high: Man cannot raise himself to it without another; *If any Man lack Wisdom*, if he is but once sensible of that; why then the sweetest, easiest Way to attain it that can be desired, is pointed out, *let him ask it of God, who gives liberally, and reproaches not*, does neither harshly refuse, nor upbraidingly give it, delights to give it to them that ask it, even his own Holy Spirit, the Spring of this Wisdom, as he hath promised.

We are all too little in this humble seeking and begging this Divine Knowledge, and that is the Cause we are so shallow and small Proficients: If thou cry and lift up thy Voice for Understanding, *Prov. ii. 3, &c.* search for it as for hid Treasures; sit down upon thy Knees and dig for it: That is the best Posture, to fall right upon the Golden Vein, and go deepest to know the Mind of God, in searching the Scriptures, to be directed and regulated in his Ways, to be made skilful in Ways of honouring him, and doing him Service; this, Men nor Angels cannot teach him, but himself alone.

Of this Wisdom we have here the *Character* and *Privilege*: 1st, The *Character*; that *observes those Things*, that looks back to the Doctrine of the Psalmist, which is very divinely sweet, extolling the Goodness of God in general in his Dealings with Men, and instancing in divers occurrent and remarkable Particulars the Fitness and Mildness of his Chastisements, the Seasonableness and Sweetness of his Deliverances, correcting us for our greater Good, and relieving us in our greatest Need, when we are nearest despairing of Relief: This is exemplified in Travellers and Prisoners, in sick Men and Seamen, and in the various Disposal of the States of all
Sorts

Sorts of Persons, the highest and the meanest; and the repeated sweet Burden of the Song is, *O that that Men would praise the Lord for his Goodness, &c.* And in the End the Result of all, *Ver. 42.* the Joy of the Godly, the Shame and silencing of the Wicked, that usually either mistake, or slight, or despise the Providence of God in the Rule of human Affairs, readily speak big their own Thoughts, which are vain, promising themselves continual Success: In the End he shall clear himself, and glad the Souls of his People, and cloath his Enemies with Shame. Wait a while, and thus it shall be; they shall change Places. He pours Contempt upon Princes, and sets the Poor on high from Affliction, and so rights himself, and them that wait on him. Then *the Righteous shall see it and rejoice, and all Iniquity shall stop her Mouth*; and it is a great Point of true Wisdom, rightly to observe these Things.

This Observing hath in it, *1st*, A believing Notice of these Things, to take such Instances aright, when they meet our Eye, to know these Things to be indeed the Lord's Doings; and so, when we are in any present Strait, to believe accordingly the same Inspection of his Eye, and secret Conduct of his Hand, to be in all. Now, it is a great Point to have the Heart established in these Persuasions. We are generally much defective in this, and they most that least suspect themselves of it. But withal, the observing or keeping these Things, (so the Word is) this firm Believing hath in it these two, following on it, and flowing from it, *serious Contemplation*, and *suitable Action*.

1st, Often to turn our Eye to the View of these Things, and to keep it on them, so as to have our Hearts warmed with them, to be deeply taken with Wonder and Love. But alas! our Souls are drowned in Flesh, dragged down from Things that become them, and are worthy of them, to drudge and weary themselves in the Mire and Clay. How few are there that make it a great Part of their daily Business,

ness, to behold God in his Works and Ways with themselves and others? Some, in respect of others, are called *great Spirits*: But Oh! What are they? What a poor Greatness is it, to project for a great Estate, or great Places and Titles, or to conceive great Revenges of little Wrongs? There is something even in Nature of Greatness of Spirit, very far beyond the bastard false Character that most take of it; that is above most Things others imagine great, and despises them: But true Greatness is this, to have a Mind much taken up with the Greatness of God, admiring and adoring him, and exciting others to do so; grieved, and holily angry, that Men regard him so little, breathing forth such Wishes, as these of the Psalmist, both to express their own Thoughts, and to awake sleeping besotted Men about them. *O that Men would praise the Lord for his Goodness, &c.* could wish a Voice that could reach many Thousands; and if they had one audible to all the World, would use it no otherwise than to be Precentors of the Praises of God, to call up and begin the Song, *O that Men would praise, &c.*

Consider yourselves, my Brethren, and trace yourselves into your own Hearts, whether often in the Day your Thoughts run this Way, finding the Meditation of God sweet to you, or if they do not run out much more to vain Things, and are seldom here; either hurried and busied in a Surcharge of Affairs; or, if vacant, yet spinning themselves out in frothy foolish Fancies, that you would be ashamed to look back upon. You might entertain divine and heavenly Thoughts, even while about your earthly Employments and Refreshments; but this is little known, and little sought after. Make it your Business to learn more of this Wisdom: Call in your Hearts, commune often with yourselves and with God; be less abroad, and more within, and more above: It is by far the sweetest Life. Beg of God to wind up your Hearts, when you find them heavy and dull, that they follow you slowly in this, and need
 8 much

much pulling and haling from your Hand; a Touch from his Hand will make them mount up easily and nimbly. Oh! seek his Drawing: *Draw me, we will run after thee.* And when you meet together, let this be your Business, to speak of him that alone is to be exalted, that doth and disposeth all as he pleases. Say to Friends, and Kindred, and Neighbours, O! how great and how gracious a God have we! Oh! that we could bless him!

2dly, To keep these Things, is to walk according to the firm Belief and frequent Thoughts of them, to fear him, and to walk humbly and warily, because our Follies draw on his Rods, and to study to please him, and no matter who be displeased; and when he corrects, to fall down humbly under his Hand, that hath our Sickness and Health, our Life and Death, and all that concerns us, in his absolute Power. If any thing advance or advantage us before others, endeavour to be the more lowly and serviceable to him; if in a low Condition, to bless and reverence him, for his Presence will turn the meanest Cottage, yea, the darkest Dungeon, into a Palace.

The chief Delight of the Saints is to offer Praises to God, to gather them in from all his Works, to send up to him: And his chief Delight in all his Works is to receive these Praises of them from their Hands; they articulate them, make a reasonable Sacrifice of them, *Psal. cxlv. All thy Works shall praise thee, and thy Saints shall bless thee.* We are called to this high Work, yet ly behind, and most unworthily and foolishly abase ourselves in other Things.

But they that are wise, if there be any, will mind this, will not let the Lord's marvellous and gracious Doings pass without Notice. It is a high Proof of his Love to us, that he loves to be seen work by us, and stoops to take our Acclamations and Approvements, hath such Regard to them, and rewards them so richly; even thus, *Whoso is wise, and will observe these Things, they shall understand the loving Kindness of the Lord.* Obs. *They that are wise and observe, shall understand*

derstand further; to him that bath shall be given, to him that usefully bath, that is, to have, and so there meant, improves it to his Advantage that gave it. The greatest Difficulty is to begin, as one said of his growing rich, "That he came hardly by a little Riches, and easily by great Riches." Having once got a Stock, he grew rich apace; so once taking, be it but the first Lessons of this Wisdom, learning these well, shall facilitate thy Knowledge exceedingly: *The wise increaseth Learning*, Prov. i. Wouldst thou but receive and hearken to the easiest Things represented by God, these would enlighten and enlarge thy Soul to receive more; especially walking by the Light thou hast, be it never so little, that invites and draws in more. Be diligent in the Practice of that you know; if you would know more, believe it, that is the Way to grow: *Whoso observes*, [keeps these Things, acts according to the Knowledge of them] he shall understand, *Job vii. 17.* shall understand it by finding it, (shall understand it in themselves, the Word is in the reciprocal Mood, *Hithpabel*) it shall be particularly and effectually shown unto him; they shall experience it, and so understand it, and that is the only lively understanding of it. Men may hear, yea, deliver large Discourses of it, and yet not understand the Thing: Happy are they to whom this is given; *Solus docet qui dat, & discit qui recipit.*

[*Loving Kindness.*] Heb. *Graciousness*; all Sorts of Kindnesses, even outward and common Mercies, in those shall he understand his Goodness, (in Recoveries and Deliveries from Dangers, and Blessings, be their Portion in them, less or more) though the Things be common, yet they come to be his own by a particular Stamp of Love, that to others they have not, and the Children of God know it, they can find it out, and can read it, though the World that looks on it cannot: And indeed, to them, the lowest Things are disposed of, in order to the highest; their daily Bread given them, by that same Love that

that gives them Christ, all is given in him: So the Curse is taken away, and all is sweetned with a Blessing. *A little that a righteous Man bath is better than the Abundance of the wicked.*

But the Things they chiefly prize and desire, as indeed they deserve so to be, are of another Sort; in their very Being and Nature, are Love-Tokens, Effects of that peculiar free Grace, that chose them to Life; and this is called the *Light of God's Countenance, his everlasting Love*. Now, *they that are wise, and observe these Things, they shall understand this loving Kindness*: Not that they first are thus wise, before they partake of this loving Kindness: No, by it this *Wisdom* was given them; but this Promise is made to their Improvement of that Gift, and walking in those *Ways of Wisdom*: Not only are they loved of God; but they shall *understand* it; he will manifest himself to them, and tell them he loves them: And the more they walk in these Ways, the more clearly shall they perceive and powerfully find his Love manifested to them.

This is the highest Inducement that can be to such as have any Interest in it; when this Love hath but once touched them, though as yet they know it not certainly, yet it works that Esteem and Affection, that nothing can be admitted into Comparison with it; while carnal Men wallow in the Puddle, these are the Crystal Streams a renewed Soul desires to bathe in, even the Love of God. O! let me find that: No matter what I have, or what I want; in Poverty, or any distressed forsaken Condition, one good Word or good Look from him makes me up: I can sit down content and chearful, and rejoice in that, though all the World frown on me, and all Things look dark and comfortless about me, that is a Piece of Heaven within the Soul. Now, of this experimental understanding Knowledge of this Love, there are different Degrees, a great Latitude in this: To some, at sometimes little Glimpses and Inlets of it, in

a more immediate way, (but these stay not, *suavis mora, sed brevis mora*;) others are upheld in the Belief of it, and live on it by Faith; though it shine not so clear, yet a Light they have to walk by: Though the Sun shines not bright out to them all their Life, yet they are led home, and understand so much Love in their Way, as shall bring them to the Fulness of it in the End. Others, having past most of the Day, have a fair Glimpse in the very Evening or Close of it, but, howsoever, they that walk in this Way by this Light, whatsoever Measure they have of it, are led by it to the Land of Light. The Connexion here made you see, *They that wisely observe these Things, shall understand this loving Kindness. A wise observing of God's Ways, and ordering our own* to his Mind, is the certain Way to attain much experienced Knowledge of his Love.

This Love is most free, and from the Beginning to the End works of itself; but, in the Method of it, he hath thus linked Things together, made one Portion of Grace, in the Use of it, draw on another; and this his Children would prudently consider. There is such a like Speech, *Psal. 1. 23. Whoso offereth Praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God.*

The Contemplation of God in his Works, sets the Soul open to receive the Influences of Love; by looking towards him, it draws his Eye towards it, as one Look of Love draws on another. Certainly, many that have some Desire of the Light of God's Countenance, and Evidences of his Love; yet, in not applying their Souls to consider him, do much prejudge themselves.

Heavenly Thoughts do refine the Soul, as Fire works itself higher, and to a purer Flame, by stirring. To be blessing God for his Goodness, giving him Praise in View of his Works in the World, and for his Church, and particularly for us; this both disposes the Heart to a more suitable Temper for receiving Divine Comforts, and invites him to let them

flow in into it. For if he have such Acknowledgments for general Goodness and common Mercies, how much larger Returns shall he have upon the Discoveries of special Love? It is a Sight of God as reconciled thou would'st have; now, Praise sets a Man amongst the Angels, and they behold his Face.

Again, *Action*, walking in his Ways humbly and carefully, and so waiting, never wants a successful Return of much Love. How can he, who is Goodness itself, hide and reserve himself from a Soul that yields up itself to him, hath no Delight but to please him, hates and avoids what may offend him? This sure is the Way, if any under Heaven, to enjoy Communion with him.

They that forget him, and disregard their Ways, and are no way careful to order them to his Liking, do but delude themselves with mistaken Fancies of Mercy. I beseech you be warned; there cannot be solid Peace in the Ways of Sin: *No Peace to the Wicked, saith my God.* Outward common Favours you may share for a Time; but these have a Curse with them to you, and you shall quickly be at an End of these Receipts; and then you would look towards him for some Persuasions of his loving Kindness, but are like to find nothing but Frowns and Displeasure. O! *Consider this, ye that forget God, (that is the greatest Disease) lest he tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver you.*

Even they that have some Title to this Love of God, and are desiring further Evidence of it, yet do often sit exceedingly in their own Light, and work against their End, still bent on that Assurance they would have, and yet neglect the Way to it, which certainly is in a manner to neglect it. Were they more busied in honouring God, doing him what Service they can in their Station, striving against Sin, acknowledging his Goodness to the World, and even to themselves, that they are yet in the Region of Hope, not cut off in their Iniquities. Thus *offering Praise, and ordering their Conversation aright, submitting unto* him,

him, and giving him Glory, their Assurances and Comforts, in the Measure he thinks fit, would come in due Time, and sooner in this Way, than in any other they could take.

Observe these Things; beware of Sin, and *ye shall understand the Loving Kindness of the Lord*. It is true, this Love of God changes not, nor hangs on thy Carriage, nor any thing without itself; yea, all our Good hangs on it; but know, as to the Knowledge and Apprehension of it, it depends much on the holy Frame of thy Heart, and exact Regulation of thy Ways. Sin obstructs and darkens all: These are the Clouds and Mists; and where any Believer is adventurous on the Ways of Sin, he shall smart for it. Where Sin is, there will be a Storm, as *Chrysostom's* Word is of *Joshuab* *, the Experience of all witnesseth this: No Strength of Faith will keep out Floods of doubting and troublous Thoughts, where any novel Sin hath opened a Gap for them to rush in by. See *David*, *Psal. li.* expressing himself, as if all were to begin again, his Joy taken away, and his Bones broken, and to Sense all undone; nothing will serve but a *new Creature*. *Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.*

There is a Congruity in the Thing itself, and God hath so ordered it, that Vexation and Anguish still attend Sin, and the Ways of Holiness be Ways of Peace. Say Men what they will, great Falls leave Wounds and Smart behind them, and they must be washed with sharper Liquor before Balm and Oil be poured into them. And not only will more notorious Breaches disturb thy Peace, but a Tract of careless and fruitless Walking. If thou abate of thy Attendance on God, and thy Fear cool towards him, slipping and falling downwards to something you are caring for and taken with, you shall find an Engagement, may be, insensible at first, and for a while, because of thy Sloth, that dost not observe diligently how it is with thee; but, after a Time, it

G g 2

shall

* *Ὅτι ἀμαρτία, ἐκὶν χυμὸν.*

shall be more easily known, but more hardly mended: And there is none of us but might find much more of God in this our Way homewards, if the Foolishness and Wandrings of our Hearts did not prejudice us.

Be persuaded then you whose Hearts he hath wrought for himself, to attend better on him, and the Advantage shall be yours: Doubt it not; and though for a Time you find it not, yet wait on, and go on in that Way, it shall not disappoint you. The more you let go of the false vain Comforts of the World for his Sake, the more richly you shall be furnished with his. Oh! we make not Room for them that is the great Hindrance: Consider him, behold his Works, bless him, confess him always worthy of *Praise for his Goodness, and his wonderful Works to the Children of Men*, however he deal with thee in particular; and assuredly he shall deal graciously with thee and e're long thou shalt find, and be forced to acknowledge it: Tho' it may be thou want these bright Shinings of Comforts thou wouldst have, yet, looking to him, and walking before him, observing the Things, thou shalt have of his Light to lead thee on and a Calm within; sweet Peace, though not the Height of Joy thou desirest.

There be often calm fair Days without Storm though it be not so clear Sun-shine, and in such Days a Man may travel comfortably. I would have Christians called off from a perplexing over-pressing the Point, of their particular Assurance. If we were more studious to please him, forgetting ourselves, we should find him remember us the more; yet not for the neither, but simply for himself. In a Word, this is thy Wisdom; mind thy Duty, and refer to him thy Comfort.

S E R M O N III.

PSAL. CXIX. 96.

I have seen an End of all Perfection; but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

GRACE is a Divine Light in the Soul, and shews the true Colours of Things. The Apostle overshoots not, when he says, *The spiritual Man judgeth all Things*: He hath undeniably the Advantage: He may judge of natural Things, but the natural Man cannot judge of spiritual Things; yea, the truest Judgment of natural Things, in respect to our chiefest End, springs particularly from spiritual Wisdom, that makes the true Parallel of Things, and gives a just Account of their Differences, as here.

I have seen an End, &c. All that have any Measure of spiritual Light are of this Mind, but certainly they that are more eminently blest with it, have a more high and clearer View of both Parts. *David*, who is generally, and with greatest Likelihood, supposed to be the Author of this Psalm, was singularly advantaged to make this Judgment of Things: He had, no doubt, a large Measure of the Knowledge of God and of his Law, which here he declares to be so large; and being both a wise and a great Man, might know more than most others, even of all other Perfections, trace them to their utmost, and see their End, as he expresses it. This same Verdict we have from his Son *Solomon*, after much Experience in all Things: who having the Advantage of Peace and Riches, did particularly set himself to this Work, to a most exact Enquiry after all Things of this Earth: He set Nature on the Rack, to confess its utmost Strength, for the delighting and satisfying of Man;

with much Pains and Art extracted the very Spirits of all; and, after all, gives the same Judgment we have here, his Book writ on that Subject being a Paraphrase on this Sentence, dilating the Sense, and confirming the Truth of it. It carries its own Sum in these two Words, which begin and end it, that *Vanity of Vanities*, and *all is Vanity*; and the other, *Fear God, and keep his Commandments*, that is the *whole Duty of Man*: And these here are just the Equivalents of these two; the former of that beginning Word, *I have seen an End of all Perfection*; and the latter of that, *but thy Commandment is exceeding broad*. And when mean Men speak of this World's Greatness, and poor Men cry down Riches, it passes but for a querulous peevish Humour, to discredit Things they cannot reach, or else an ignorant Misprision of Things they do not understand; or, taking it a little further but a self-pleasing Shift, willingly underprizing these Things of purpose, to allay the Displeasure of the Want of them; or at the best, if something of Truth and Goodness be in the Opinion, yet that the Assent of such Persons is (as the Temperance of sickly Bodies) rather a Virtue made of Necessity, than embraced of free Choice: But to hear a wise Man, in the Height of these Advantages, proclaim their Vanity, yea, Kings from the very Thrones whereon they sit, in their royal Robes, to give forth this Sentence upon all the Glories and Delights about them, is certainly above all Exception. Here are two, the Father and the Son; the one raised from a mean Condition to the Crown; instead of a Shepherd's Staff, to wield a Sceptre, and that, after many Afflictions and Dangers in the Way to it, which to some Palates give a higher Relish and Sweetness to Honour, than if it had slid on them, ere they could feel it, in the cheap easy way of an undoubted Succession. Or, if any think *David's* best Days a little cloudy, by the Remains of Insurrections and Oppositions, in that Case usual, as the jumbling of the Water not fully quieted for a while after the same is over; then take

the Son, succeeding to as fair a Day as Heart can wish, both a compleat Calm of Peace, and bright Sun-shine of Riches and Regal Pomp, (and he able to improve these to the highest;) and yet both these are perfectly of the same Mind in this great Point. The Son having Peace, and Time for it, though a King, would make his Throne a Pulpit, and be a Preacher of this one Doctrine, to which the Father's Sentence is the fittest Text I have seen.

The Word's give an Account of a double Prospect; the latter, as it were, the Discovery of a new World after the travelling over the old, expressed in the former Clause, *I have seen an End of all Perfection*, i. e. taken an exact View of all other Things, and seen their End; *but thy Commandment* is of exceeding Extent and Perfection, and I see but a Part, and there is no End of it.

I have seen an End.] I have tried and made Experiment of much of what this World affords, and the rest I see to the uttermost of it, how far it reaches. The Psalmist, as standing on a vantage Ground, sees clearly round about him the farthest Horizon of earthly Excellencies and Advantages, and finds them not to be infinite or unmeasurable, sees that they are bounded, yea, what their Bounds are, how far they go at their very farthest, *an End of all*, even Perfection; and this is in effect what I find, that their End drops short of Satisfaction. A Man may think and desire beyond them, yea, not only *may*, but *must*; he cannot be terminate by their Bounds, will still have a Stretch further, and feels them leave him, and then finds a Void: All which he says most ponderously in these short Words; giving the World the Slight, thus, "It is not so great a Matter as Men imagine. "it; the best of it I have examined, and considered. "it to the full, taken the whole Dimension: All the "Profits and Pleasures under the Sun, their utmost "goes but a short Way; the Soul is vaster than all, "can look and go much farther."

I will not attempt the Particulars, to reckon all, or be large in any ; the Preacher *Solomon* hath done this matchlesly, and *who is he that can come after the King?* If any be sick of that poor Disease, Esteem of Riches, he can tell you the utmost of these, that when they increase, they are increased that eat them, and *what Good is to the Owners thereof, save the beholding of them with their Eyes.* Yea, locking them up, and not using them, and still gathering, and all to no Use; this is a Madness, it is all one as if they were still in the Mines under the Ground, and the Difference none, but in turmoiling Pains in gathering, and tormenting Care in keeping. But take the best View of them, supposing that they be used, *i. e.* spent on Family and Retinue; why then, what hath the Owner but the Sight of them for himself? Of all his Dishes, he fills but one Belly; of all his fair Houses, and rich furnish'd Rooms, he lodges but in one at once; and if his great Rent be needful for his great Train, or any other Ways of Expence, is it a Vantage to need much? Or is he not rather poorer that needs Five or Six thousand Pounds by Year, than he that needs but One hundred?

Of all the Festivities of the World, and Delights of Sense, the Result is, Laughter is mad, and Mirth, and Orchards, and Musick, these Things pass away as a Dream, and as still to begin; and so gross and earthly are they, that for the Beasts they may be a fit Good; for the divine immortal Soul they cannot. A Horse lying at Ease in a fat Pasture may be compared with those that take Delight in them.

Honour and Esteem are yet vainer than these Pleasures and Riches that furnish them: Though they be nothing but Wind, compared to solid Soul-Delights; yet as to Nature, there is in them somewhat more real than in the Fame of Honour, which is no more indeed than an airy imaginary thing, and hangs more on others than any thing else, and not only on Persons above them, but even these below; especially that Kind, that the Vanity of Man is much taken with,

all

all popular Opinion, than which there is nothing more light and poor, and that is more despised by the elevated Sort of natural Spirits; a Thing as unworthy as it is unconstant. No Slavery like the affecting of vulgar Esteem; it enthrals the Mind to all Sorts, often the worthiest share least in it, *Eccles. ix. 11, 15.* True Worth is but sometimes honoured, but always envied, *Eccles. iv. 4.* And with whomsoever it is thou seekest to be esteemed, be it with the Multitude, or more chiefly with the wiser and better Sort, what a narrow thing is it at largest? How many Nations neither know thee, nor those that know thee?

Beyond all these Things is inward Worth, and even that natural Wisdom, such as some Minds have, to a far more refined Height than others; a Man by it fees round about him, yea, and within himself: That *Solomon* grants to be an excellent Thing, *Chap. iv. 13.* yet presently finds the End of that Perfection, *Ver. 16.* that guards not from Disasters and Vexations; yea, there is in it an innate Grief, amidst so many Follies, *Chap. vii. 18.* Yea, give a Man the Confluence of all these, which is so rare, make him at once rich and honourable, and healthful, and encompassed with all the Delights of Nature and Art, and wise, to make the best Improvement of all they can well afford, and there is much in that; yet there is an End of all these Perfections: For there is quickly an End of himself that hath them; he dies, and that spoils all; breaks the Strings, and that ends the Musick. And the highest of natural Wisdom, which is the Soul of all Nature's Advantages, that ends then, if practical or political. In that Day are all State Projects and high Thoughts laid low, if speculative; for in spite of all Sciences and Knowledge of Nature, a Man goes out in the Dark; and if thou art learned in many Languages, one Death silences all thy Tongues at once. So *Solomon*, *Eccles. ii. 16.* Yea, I suppose a Man were not broke off, but continued still in the Top of all these Perfections; yea, imagine much more, the chiefest Delights of Sense that have ever been

been found out, more solid and certain Knowledge of Nature's Secrets, all moral Composure of Spirit, the highest Dominion, not only over Men, but a deputed Command over Nature's Frame, the Course of all the Heavens, the Affairs of all the Earth, and that he was to abide in this Estate; yet would he see *an End of this Perfection*, that is, it would come short of making him happy. It is an Union with a higher Good by that Love that subjects all Things to him, that alone is the endless Perfection: *Thy Commandment is exceeding broad.*

You may think this a beaten Subject, and possibly some other Cases or Questions fitter for Christians; I wish it were more needless: But Oh! the Deceitfulness of our Hearts; even such as have shut out the Vanities of this World at the Fore-gate, let them in again, or some Part of them at least, at the Postern. Few Hearts clearly come off untied from all, still lagging after somewhat, and thence so little delight in God, in Prayer, and holy Things; and though there be no fixed Esteem of other Things, yet that Undisposedness to holy Ways argues some sickly Humour latent in the Soul, and therefore this is almost generally needful, that Men be called to consider what they seek after. Amidst all thy Pursuits, stop, and ask thy Soul, For what End all this? At what do I aim? For, sure by Mens Heat in these lower Things, and their cold Indifference for Heaven, it would seem we take our Portion to be here: But, Oh! miserable Portion at the best! O! short-lived Happiness! Look on them, and learn to see this the *End of all Perfections*; and have an Eye beyond them, till your Hearts be we'll weaned from all Things under the Sun! Oh! there is little Acquaintance with the Things that are above it, little Love of them; still some Pretensions, some Hopes that flatter us, I will attain this or that; and then—Then what? What if *this Night, thou Fool, thy Soul shall be required of thee?*

But thy Commandments.] The former Part of this Sentence hath within every Man's Breast somewhat to suit with it and own it; readily, each Man according to his Experience, and the Capacity of his Soul, hath his Sense (if awaking) of the Unsatisfaction of all this World; give him what thou wilt, yet still there is empty Room within, and a Pain in that Emptiness, and so Vexation; a tormenting Windiness in all: And Men of more contemplative Minds have higher and clearer Thoughts of this Argument and Matter, and may rise to a very high moral Contempt of the World, and some of them have done so. But this other Part is more sublime and peculiar to a Divine Illumination; that which we find not *without*, we would have *within*, and work out of ourselves, which cannot be extracted from Things about us. Philosophy is much on this, but it is upon a false Scent, and still deluded: No, it is *without* us, not *within* us, but *above* us; that Fulness is in God, and no Communion with him, or Enjoyment of him, but in the Way of his Commandment: Therefore this is the Discovery that answers and satisfies, *Thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* Commandment: He speaks of all as one, I conceive, for that Ty and Connexion of them all, for which he that breaks one is guilty of all: A Rule they are, and so one, as a Rule must be, one Authority through all; that is the golden Thread they are strung on, break that any where, and all the Pearls drop off; *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have Respect to all thy Commandments:* Otherwise, one Piece shames another, like uneven and incongruous Ways; the Legs of the lame not being even, make an unseemly Going. And as it is here, so a plural Word is joined with the singular, *Ver. 137. and Psal. cxxxii. Deum tradunt Hebræi, unâ voce, eloquio uno, hoc est, uno Spiritu & halitu, sine ulla interpiratione, mora, pausa, vel distinctione, ita ut omnia verba, tanquam verbum unum, & vox una, fuerant, elocutum. Atque hinc volunt duplicem illam accentuum rationem in Decalogo ortam, ut altera una, illa*

illa Dei continuata elocutio, altera hominum tarda & distincta, judicetur.

And it is fitly here spoken of, as *one* opposed to all Varieties and Multitudes of Things beside, *Thy Commandment*, each linked to one another; and that one Chain reaches beyond all the incoherent Perfections in the World, if one were added to another, and drawn to a length. *This Commandment is exceeding broad*; the very *Breadth* immense, and therefore the *Length* must be much more so, no End of it. That Good to which it leads and joins the Soul, is enough for it; compleat and full in its Nature, and endless in its Continuance: So that there is no measuring, no End of it any way; but all other *Perfections* have their Bounds of Being, and Period of Duration; so each Way an End is to be found of them. Now, in this the Opposition is the more admirable, that he speaks not expressly of the Enjoyment of God, but of the Commandment of God: He extols that above all the Perfections of the World; which is much to be remarked, as having in it a clear Character of the purest and highest Love. It had been more obvious to all, had he said, "I have
 " seen the utmost of all besides thee, but thou, O
 " God, the Light of thy Countenance, the blessed
 " Vision of thy Face, that alone boundless and end-
 " less Happiness;" or to have taken it below the full perfect Enjoyment of Glory, but some Glances let in to the Soul here, a comfortable Word from God, a Look of Love. O! how far surpassing all the continued Caresses and Delights of the World; speaks not of that neither, but, *Thy Commandment is exceeding broad*. As the Apostle says, *The Foolishness of God is wiser than Mens Wisdom*, 1 Cor. i. So here, that of God that seems lowest and hardest, is infinitely beyond whatsoever is highest and sweetest in the World; the obeying his Commands, his very Service is more profitable than the World's Rewards; his Commands more excellent than the Perfection of the World's Enjoyments: To be subject to him is

truer

truer Happinefs than to command the whole World. Pure Love reckons thus, " Though no further Reward were to follow, Obedience to God (the Perfection of his Creature, and its very Happinefs) carries its full Recompense in its own Bosom." Yea, Love delights most in the hardest Services: It is Self-love to love the Embraces and Rest of Love, but it is Love to him indeed to love the Labour of Love, and the Service of it; and that not so much because it leads to Rest, and ends in it, but because it is Service to him whom we love: Yea, that Labour is in itself a Rest; it is so natural and sweet to a Soul that loves, as the Revolution of the Heavens, which is a Motion in Rest, and Rest in Motion; changes not Place, though running still: So the Motion of Love is truly heavenly, and circular still in God; beginning in him, and ending in him; and so not ending, but still moving without Weariness.

Let us see what the Commandment is, and that will clear it; for it is nothing but Love: All is in that one, *Love the Lord*, &c. So the *Command* that is here called so broad, is *Love*; there is no measuring that, for its Object is immensurable. We readily exceed in the Love of any other thing; but in the Love of God, there is no Danger of exceeding; its true Measure is to know no Measure.

According as the Love is, so is the Soul; it is made like to, yea, it is made one with that which it loves. By loving gross base Things, it becomes gross, and turns to Flesh, or Earth; and so, by the Love of God, is made divine, is one with him *. So this is the Excellency of the Command enjoining Love. God hath a Good-will to all his Creatures; but that he should make a Creature capable of loving him, and appoint this for his Command, Oh! herein his Goodness shines brightest. Now, though fallen from this, we are again invited to it; though degenerated and accursed in our sinful Nature,

* *Si terram amas, terra es; si Deum amas, quid vis ut dicam, Deus es?* Aug.

ture, yet we are renewed in Christ, and this Command is renewed in him, and a new way of fulfilling it is pointed out.

This *Command is broad*; there is Room enough for the Soul in God, that is hamper'd and pinch'd in all other Things. Here, *love with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, &c.* stretch it to the utmost; there is enough for it here, it must contract and draw itself to other Things. *I will walk at Liberty*, says David, *for I seek thy Precepts*: That which perverse Nature judges Thralldom, once truly known, is only Freedom; this because the Law is Love, and such a Love as brings full Content to the Soul. Man hath not an Object of Love beside God; too many that can torment and trouble him, but not one that by being loved of him, satisfies and quiets him; whether he loves Things without him, or himself, still he is pained and restless. All other Things he loves naturally, in reference to himself; but himself is not a sufficient Object for him: It must be something that adds to and perfects his Nature, to which he must be united in Love, somewhat higher than himself, yea, highest of all, the Father of Spirits, that alone compleats a spirit, and blesses it, to love him, the Spring of Spirits.

Now, this Love, as Obedience to his Commands, is a Thing in itself due, and expressly commanded too. This is the Thing that surpasses all Pursuits, and all Enjoyments under Heaven, not only to be loved of God, but to love him; yea, could they be severed, this rather would be the Deformity and Misery of the Creature, to hate him. This is the Hell of Hell.

And to love him, not only with Complacency, a Desire to enjoy him; but, moreover, wishing him Glory, doing him Service, desiring he may be honoured by all his Creatures, and endeavouring ourselves to honour him; that is our Work, applauding the Praises of Angels and all Creatures, and adding ours, *Psal. ciii. 22.* sweet, willing, entire Submission

mission to his Will, ready to do, to suffer any thing for him. Oh! away all base muddy Pleasures, all false Night Shows of earthly Glories, all high Attempts and heroick Virtues; these have their Measure and their Close, and prove in the End but Lies. This Command, this Love alone, is the endless Perfection and Delight of Souls, that begins here, and is compleated above. The Happiness of Glory is the Perfection of Holiness; that is the full Beauty and Loveliness of the Spouse, the Lamb's Wife.

Oh! how much are the Multitudes of Men to be pitied, that are hunting they know not what, still pursuing Content, and it still flying before, and they at as great a Distance, as when they promised themselves to lay hold on it. It is strange what Men are doing. *Ephraim feedeth on the Wind.* The most serious Designs of Men are more foolish than the Plays of Children; all the Difference is, that these are fowrer and more sad Trifles*.

Oh! that ye would turn this Way, and not still lay out your *Money for that which is not Bread*, &c. You would find the saddest Part of a spiritual Course of Life hath under it more true Sweetness, than all your empty Mirths, that sound much, and are nothing, like the *crackling of Thorns under the Pot*: There is more Joy in enduring a Cross for God, than in the Smiles of the World; in a private despised Affliction, without the Name of suffering for his Cause, or any thing in it like Martyrdom, but only as coming from his Hand, kissing it, and bearing it patiently, yea, gladly for his Sake, out of Love to him because it is his Will so to try thee, What can come amiss to a Soul thus composed?

I wish that even they, who have renounced the vain World, and have the Faces of their Hearts turned God-wards, would learn more this happy Life, and enjoy it more, not to hang so much upon sensible Comforts, as to delight in Obedience, and to wait for those at his Pleasure, whether he

* *Trifles ine. tia.*

gives

gives much or little, any or none. Learn to be still finding the Sweetness of his Commands, which no outward or inward Change can disrelish; rejoicing in the Actings of that Divine Love within thee: Continue the Conflicts with Sin, and though thou may'st at Times be foiled, yet cry to him for Help; and getting up, redouble thy Hatred at it; and Attempts against it. Still stir this Flame of God, that will overcome: *Many Waters cannot quench it.* It is a renewed Pleasure, to be offering up thyself every Day to God. Oh! the sweetest Life in the World to be crossing thyself, to please him; trampling on thy own Will, to follow his.

S E R M O N IV.

HABAKKUK III. 17, 18.

Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines; the Labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no Meat; the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.

MOST Mens Industries and Employments are most without them, but certainly our main and worthiest Business lies within us; nor is ever a Man fit for the Varieties and Vicissitudes of Time and Affairs without, till he have taken some Pains to some good Purpose within himself. A distempered discomposed Mind is as a Limb out of Joint, which

which is fit for no Action, and moves both deformedly and painfully. That which we have to do, my Brethren, for which these our Meetings are commanded of God, and should be attended by us, and that we should follow out, when we are gone from hence, is this, the reducing of our Souls to God: Their Disunion from him is their Disjointing, and they are never right till they refix on him; and being there, they are so right, that nothing can come wrong to them. As they are not readily ensnared with Ease and Plenty, so neither lightly astonished with Want and Trouble; but, in the Ebb of all other Comforts, can hold the Prophet's Purpose, *to joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of their Salvation.*

This we may hear and speak of, but truly few attain it. I fear many of us are not so much as seeking after it, and aspiring to it. A Soul really conversant with God is taken up with him; all its Affections work and move towards him, as the Prophet's here, his *Fear*, his *Joy*, his *Trust*, *Ver. 16, 17, 18, 19.* This is a Prayer, as it is entituled, but it is both a prophetical, and an unusual one, a *Prophecy* and a *Song* (as the Word added imports) of *Habakkuk* the Prophet on *Neginoth*. The Strain of it is high, and full of sudden Raptures and Changes, as that Word signifies: As here, having exprest much Fear in the foregoing Words, a shivering trembling Horror, yet adds such an Height of invincible Kind of Joy; as the Needle of the Compass fixedly looking towards him, yet not without a trembling Motion. Thus we have the Temper of the Psalmist, *rejoice with trembling*; which suits well to so sublime an Object, joying in God, *because he is good*; yet Joy still mix'd with holy Awe, *because he is great*: And this especially in time of great Judgments, or in the lively Apprehensions or Representations of them, whether before or after their inflicting; whether they be on the People of God for their Iniquities, or on the Enemies of God for their Oppressions and Cruelties to his People, while he made them Instruments for their Correction. In both, God is formi-

dable, and greatly to be feared, even by those that are nearest to him: This we find in the Prophets seeing Judgments afar off, long before their Day, which they had Commission to denounce: So this Prophet here, not only discovers great Awe and Fear at what he saw and foretold concerning God's own People the *Jews*, but at the after reckoning with the *Chaldeans*, his and their Enemies. When God comes to do Judgment on the Wicked, this will make them that stand by, and suffer not with them, yet to tremble; yea, such as are advantaged by it, as usually the People of God are, their Enemies Ruin proving their Deliverance. The Majesty and Greatness of God, and Terribleness of his March towards them, and seizing on them, as it is here highly set forth, this works an awful Fear in the Hearts of his own Children, they cannot see their Father angry but it makes them quake, though it be not against them, but on their Behalf. And this were our right Temper, when we see or hear of the Hand of God against wicked Men, that run their own Courses against all Warning, not to entertain these Things with carnal Rejoicings and Lightness of Mind, or with boasting Insultations; to applaud indeed the Righteousness of God, and to give him his Glory; but withal, to fear before him, though they were Strangers, and no way a Part of ourselves, to have a humble Sense of the Lord's dealing in it; so, *Psal. liii. 6.* and to learn to reverence God, *in all your Ways to acknowledge him*; to be sure to take him along with us, and to undertake nothing without him.

And this Fear of Judgments in others, is the Way not to feel them on ourselves. When God sees that the Sound of the Rod on others Backs will humble a Soul or a People, he will spare the Stroke of it. They that have most of this holy Fear of God's Anger, fall least under the Dint of it. *Blessed is he that feareth always; but he that hardens his Heart, shall fall into Mischiefs.* He that fears it not, shall fall into it; he that tears and trembles at it, shall escape: So

the Prophet here trusts for himself, *I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the Day of Trouble*, Ver. 16. and upon his Confidence, arises to this high Resolution.

The Words, to make no other Division of them, are a Conjecture of a *sad Supposition*, and a *cheerful Position* or *Purpose*.

Although the Fig-tree, &c. This is a Thing that may come, and, possibly, that the Prophet did foresee would come amongst other Judgments, and it is of all other outward Scourges the forest, most smarting, and most sweeping, cuts off most People, and can least be suffered and shifted. It lieth amongst the rest in the Store-house of divine Judgments; he that furnish'd the Earth, and gave Being by the Word of his Mouth to all these Things, hath still the sole absolute Power of them; they obey his Word of Command; and rightly look'd upon, in our Use of them, and the Sweetness we find in them, lead us to him, as the Spring of Being and Goodness. He is invisible in his Nature, in his Works most visible and legible; not only the spacious Heavens and glorious Lights in them, but the meanest Things on Earth, every Plant and Flower in their Being and Growing, yea, every Pile of Grass declare God to us.

And 'tis supernatural Delight in natural Things, to see and taste him in them, 'tis more pleasant than their natural Relish: 'Tis the chief inner Sweetness, the Kernel and Marrow of all, and they that take not the Pains, and have not the Skill to draw it forth, lose the far better Half of their Enjoyments, even of the Things of this Earth. To think how wise he is that devised such a Frame, how powerful that made all these Things, how rich he must be that still continues to furnish the Earth with these Varieties of Provisions; how sweet must he be, whence all these Things draw their Sweetness? But, alas! we are brutish, and in our Use of these Things we differ little or nothing from the Beast. We are called to a higher Life, but we live it not. *Man is in Honour, but he understands it not; he is as the Beast that*
H h 2 *perishes.*

perishes. Now, because we acknowledge God so little in the Use of these Things, therefore he is put to it, (so to speak) to teach us our Lesson, in the Want and Deprivation of them, which our Dulness is more sensible of. We know Things a great deal better by wanting them than by having them, and take more Notice of that Hand that hath Power of them, when he withdraws, than when he bestows them.

Besides all other Provocations and particular Abuses of these Things in Intemperance and Luxury, were it no more but the very disacknowledging of God, the Inobservance of his Goodness; this calls for a Famine to diet us into wiser Thoughts, and remember us of our own and all other Creatures Dependence on that God whom we so forgot, as to serve our Idols and base Lusts upon his Bounty. This was the Case of *Judah* and *Israel*, *Hos.* ii. 8, 13. but when more sparingly fed, and better taught in the Wilderness, these were restored again, *Ver.* 14, 15. then all acknowledge the Dowry of that blessed Marriage with himself, *Ver.* 16. which is so far beyond all Account.

How wretched Ingratitude is it, not to regard and love him in the Use of all his Mercies; but horrid Stupidity, not to consider, and seek to him in their Withdrawment, or the threatening of it. Few have a right Sense of his Hand in any thing; they grumble and cry out, but not to him, as of Oppression, *Job xxxv.* 9, 10. So of this very Judgment of Famine, *Hos.* vii. 14. *Ephraim-howled, and cried not to me,* did not humbly and repentingly seek to me by Prayer; but a natural brutish Sense of their Wants press'd out Complaints; they howled, as a hungry Dog would do for Bread: This is all the most do, in Years of Dearth, or Harvests threatening it. No Beast in the Mountain or Wilderness is so untamed as the Heart of Man, which, when caught in God's Judgments, lies and cries as a wild Bull in a Net. 'Tis true, they are somewhat nearer sober Thoughts in Distress and Grief, though natural, yet nearer spiritual

ritual Grief, than their Mirth and Laughter; but it must have a Touch of that Spirit above, to make it spiritual, to make it change to Gold, to turn it to godly Sorrow. No Scourge carries a Power of changing the Heart with it; that is a superadded Work. Many People, and particular Persons, have been beat as in a Mortar with Variety of Afflictions, one coming thick upon another, and yet are never the wiser, and yet *have not returned unto me, saith the Lord.*

Therefore, if you be afflicted, join Prayer with your Correction; and beg by it, that God would join his Spirit with it: Seek this in earnest, else you shall be not a whit the better, but shall still endure the Smart, and not reap the Fruit thereof; yea, I believe, some are the worse, even by falsely imagining they are better, partly presuming it must be so, and partly, may be, feeling some present Motions and Meltings in the Time of Afflictions, which vanish and presently cool when they are off the Fire: Ay, but these two together make a happy Man; *Blessed is he whom thou correctest, and teachest out of thy Law.*

Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom.] This sometimes does, and at any Time may befall a Land; but however, it is very useful to put such Cases. 'Tis true, there is great Odds betwixt real and imagined Distresses; yet certainly the frequent viewing of its Picture, though it is no more in thy Imagination, hath so much Likeness, as somewhat abates the Strangeness and Frightfulness of its true Visage, when it comes.

There is a foolish Pre-apprehension of possible Evils, that, whether they come or no, does no Good, but makes Evils to come perplexingly before-hand, and ante-dates their Misery, and adds the Pain of many others that will never come: These are the Fumes of a dark distempering Humour, vain Fears, that vex and trouble some Minds in present, and do not waste any thing of any Grief to come after. But calmly and composedly to sit down and consi-

der evil Days coming, any kind of Trials that probably, yea, or possibly, may arrive, so as to be ready to entertain them without Astonishment; this is a wise and useful Exercise of thy Mind, and takes off much of the Weight of such Things, breaks them in falling on us, that they come not so sad down, when they light first upon the Apprehension. Thus, it is true, nothing comes unawares to a wise Man; he hath supposed all, or as bad as any thing that can come, hath acquainted his Mind with the horridest Shapes, and therefore, when such Things appear, will not so readily start at them.

This I would advise to be done, not only in Things we can more easily suffer, but those we think would prove hardest and most indigestible, to inure thy Heart to them; not to be, as some, so tender-fancied, that they dare not so much as think of some Things, the Death of a dear Friend, or Husband, or Wife, or Child, that is oftner to be viewed rather than any other Event: Bring thy Mind to it, as a starting Horse to that whereat it does most startle at. What if I should be bereft of such a Person, such a Thing; this would make it much more tolerable when thou art put to it. What if the Place where I live were visited with all at once in some Degree, Pestilence, and Sword, and Famine? How would I look on them? Could my Mind keep its own Place and Stance, fix'd on God in such a Case? What if I were turned out of my good Furniture and warm House, and stript not only of accessary, but necessary Things; as here he supposes, not only the failing of Delicacies, the Fig-trees, Wine and Olives, but of common necessary Food: the Fields not yielding Meat, and the Flocks cut off; thy little ones crying for Bread, and thou hast none for them: You little know what the tenderest and delicatest among you may be put to. These Times have given many real Instances within these Kingdoms, of strange Changes in the Condition of all Ranks of Persons: Or, think if that thou abhorrest that, what if I were smitten with

Botches

Botches or loathsome Sores on my Flesh; or if by any Accident I should lose an Arm, or an Eye, or both Eyes? What if extreme Poverty, and Sicknes, and forsaking of Friends, come all at once? Could I welcome these, and make up all in God, find Riches, and Friends, and Fulness in him? Most Men, if they would speak truly to such Cases, must declare them unsufferable. I were undone, if such a thing beset me, or such a Comfort were taken from me, most would cry out, as *Micah* did, *Judg. xvii. They have taken away my Gods, &c.* for so are these Things; our Hearts cleave to, and principally joy in them. He that worships Mammon, his Purse is the sensiblest Piece of him; he is broke, if Fire, or other Ravage of War, throw him out of his Nest, and empty it. He that makes his *Belly his God*, (such they are the Apostle speaks of) how could he endure this Case the Prophet puts here, the failing of Vines, of Flocks and Herds?

It were good to add to the Suppose of Want somewhat of the Reality of it; sometime to abridge thyself of Things thou desirest and lovest; to inure thy Appetite to a Refusal of what it calls for; to practise somewhat of Poverty; to learn to need few Things, &c.

'Tis strange Men should be so foolish as to ty themselves to these Things, that have neither satisfying Content in them, nor certain Abode. And why should'st thou set thy Heart *on Things which are not*, says *Solomon*, a *non-ens*, a Fancy? How soon may you be parted? He that is the true God, God alone, how soon can he pull these false Gods from you, or you from them? as in that Word, *Job xxvii. 8. What is the Hope of the Hypocrite that he hath gained, when God takes away his Soul?* Like that Case in the Parable, *Luke xii. 19. Soul, take thy Rest: A strange Inference from full Barns! That was sufficient Provision for a Horse, a fit Happiness for him: But for a Soul, though it were to stay, how gross and base*

a Portion? but it cannot stay neither, *This Night thy Soul shall be required of thee, &c.*

The only firm Position is this of the Prophet, *Yet will I rejoice in the Lord.* And such Times indeed are fit to give Proof of this; to tell thee, whether it be so indeed, where thy Heart is built. While thy Honour, and Wealth, and Friends are about thee, it is hard to know whether these Stoops bear thee up, or another invisible Supporter; but when these are pluck'd away, and thou art denuded round about, then it will appear, if thy Strength be in God, if these other Things were but Flourishes about thee, and thou laidst no Weight on them at all; he that leans on these, must fall when these fall, and his *Hope is cut off*, and his *Trust as a Spider's Web.* He shall lean upon his House, but it shall not stand, &c. Job vii. 14, 15. They that clasp their Hearts about their Houses or Estates, within a while they are either sadly pulled asunder, or swept away together.

But, Oh! the bless'd, the high Condition of a Soul set on God, untied, independent from all Things beside him; its whole Dependence and Rest placed on him alone, sitting loose to all the World, and so not stirred with Alterations: Yea, the Turnings upside-down of human Things, if the Frame of the Heaven and Earth were falling to pieces*, the Heart founded on him that made it abides unmoved, *the everlasting Arms are under it*, and bear it up.

Do ye believe, my Brethren, that there is such a thing, that it is no Fancy? Yea, all is but Fancy beside it. Do you believe? Why then is one Day after another put off, and this not attained, nor the Soul so much as entred or engaged to a serious Endeavour after it, looking on all Things else, compared to this noble Design, as Vanity? How often and easily are their Joys damp'd, that rejoice in other Things, their Hopes broken, and what they expected most, soon proves a Lie? As the Word spoken of the *Olive* here signifies, as if the *Labour* of it should

lie,

* *Si fractus illabitur orbis.*

†, a fair Vintage or Harvest promised, and either withered with Drought, or drowned with Rain; indeed Lies at the best. But the Soul that places its Joy on God, is still fresh and green, when all are withered about it. *Jer. xvii. 6, 7. Acquaint thyself with him* betimes in Ease. It is a sad Case, to be to make Acquaintance with him, when thou should'st make Use of his Friendship, and find Comfort in his Love.

Now, this Joy in God cannot remain in an impure unholy Soul, no more than Heaven and Hell can mix together. An impure unholy Soul I call not that that is stained with Sin, for no other are under the Sun, all must then quit all Pretensions to that Estate; but such an one as willingly entertains and delights in any sinful Lust or Way of Wickedness; that Delight and this is directly opposite. And certainly the more the Soul is refin'd from all Delights of Sin, yea, even from sinless Delights of Sense, and of this present World, it hath the more Capacity, the fitter and the larger Room for this pure heavenly Delight.

No Language can make a natural Man understand what this Thing is, to *rejoice in God*: Oh! it is a Mystery. Most mind poor childish Things, laughing and crying at a Breath at Trifles, easily puff'd up, and as easily cast down. But even the Children of God are too little acquainted with this their Portion. Which of you find this Power in the Remembrance of God, that it doth overflow and drown all other Things, both your worldly Joys and worldly Sorrows, that you find them not? And thus it would be, if we knew him. Is he then our Father, and yet we know him not?

Although all fail, yet rejoice in him that fails not, that alters not: He is still the same in himself, and to the Sense of the Soul that is knit to him; then sweetest, when the World is bitterest: When other Comforts are withdrawn, the Loss of them brings this great Gain, so much the more of God, and his

Love imparted, to make up all. They that ever found this, could almost wish for Things that others are afraid of. If we knew how to improve them, his sharpest Visits would be his sweetest; thou would'st be glad to catch a Kiss of his Hand, while he is beating thee, or pulling away something from thee that thou lovest, and blest him while he is doing so.

Rejoice in God, although the Fig-tree blossom not, &c. yea, rejoice in these hardest Things, as his Doing. A Heart rejoicing in him, delights in all his Will, and is surely provided to the most firm Joy in all Estates: For if nothing can come to pass beside or against his Will, then cannot that Soul be vexed that delights in him, and hath no Will but his, but follows him in all Times, and in all Estates; not only when he shines bright on them, but when they are clouded. That Flower that follows the Sun, doth so even in cloudy Days; when it doth not shine forth, yet it follows the hidden Course and Motion of it: So the Soul that moves after God, keeps that Course when he hides his Face, is content, yea, is glad at his Will in all Estates, or Conditions, or Events. And though not only all be withered and blasted without, but the Face of the Soul little better within to Sense, no flourishing of Grace for the present, yet rejoices in him, and in that everlasting Covenant that still holds, *ordered in all Things and sure*, as the sweet Singer of Israel sweetly expresses it, 2 Sam xxv. 5. *For this, says he, is all my Salvation, and all my Desire, ALTHOUGH he make it not to grow:* That is a strange *Although*, and yet is he satisfied even in that.

This Joy in God, as *my God, the God of my Salvation*, ought to exercise the Soul in the darkest and worst Times, and ought to stick to it, not to let go this Confidence; still expecting Salvation from him, and resting on him for it, though not having these Senses and Assurances that thou desirest. This weak Believers are easily beaten from by Temptation; but we are to stand to our Right in him, even when

we see it not: And when it is said to thee, as *Psal.* iii. that *there is no Help for thee in God*, tell all that say so, they lie, *He is my God, my Glory, and the Lifter up of my Head*, as here he speaks.

Rejoice in him still as thy God; and, however, rejoice in him as God. I will rejoice in *Jehovah*, glad that he is God, that his Enemies cannot unsettle nor reach his Throne; that he rules, and is glorious in all Things; that he is self-blessed, and needs nothing: This is the purest and highest kind of Rejoicing in him, and is certainly most distant and most free from Alteration, and hath, indeed, most of Heaven in it.

S E R M O N V.

I COR. I. 30.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.

THE great Design of the Gospel is to bring Men to Jesus Christ; and, next to that, to instruct those that are brought to him in the clearest Knowledge, and to keep them in the fresh Remembrance of the Privileges and Happiness they have in him. This the Apostles, writing to new Converts, are much on, and *Paul* most abundantly; but no where more excellently and fully than in these Words.

As that is a great and much commended Oracle, *γινώσκει σεαυτόν*, (*Know thyself*) so also there can be nothing more comfortable and profitable for a Christian than this Point, to understand his new Being, to know himself, as out of himself in Christ, to study what he is there. Ch! what Joy, what Humility,
what

what Holiness would it work, were we well seen and much conversant in this Subject, viewing ourselves in this Light, as here the Apostle represents a Believer to himself, *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, &c.*

If we look back a little, we see his Aim is to vindicate the Doctrine of Christ from Contempt in that chief Point, which is the greatest Comfort and Glory; yet lies openest to the World's Misprision, the Doctrine of the Cross, Christ crucified. Him we preach, says he, let Men take it as they please; be he a *Stumbling to the Jews, and Foolishness to the Gentiles, yet, to them that believe in both, he is the Power of God, and Wisdom of God.*

As in the Person of Christ, Glory was wrapt up in Meanness; so in his Sufferings and Death, and the Doctrine of it, (and in the way of preaching it) they are not drest with *human Wisdom, or Excellency of Speech,* (this would be as incongruous as that rich gaudy Attire they cover the Image of the Virgin with, and her Child lying in a Stable) and that all might be suitable, so is it in the Persons of these that believe on him. *Brethren, you see your Calling, &c. and God's Purpose in this is, that no Flesh should glory before him.*

This is the grand Disease of Flesh, to swell in Conceit of any little Advantages, real or imagined, forgetting itself and him from whom it receives all, receives its very self, the Being it hath, and all superadded Good. Now, God is pleased, in Justice on some, and great Mercy to others, so to order most Things in the World, as to allay this Tumour; often bringing down high Things, and raising low; and so attempering and levelling Disparities, as to take Men off from Self-glorying. Proud Undertakings, we see, are commonly most disgracefully broken. Nor is there any surer Presage of the speedy Ruin of any Affairs or Persons, than presumptuous Boasting. This is God's Work amongst Men, as even natural Men have observed, to abase high Things, to exalt low Things; he goes from one Thing

Thing to another, pulling down the Crest, and blasting the Glory of all human Excellency, breaking the likeliest Projects, and effecting what is least to be expected, withdrawing Man from his Purpose, to hide Pride from his Eyes, as he speaks, *Job xxxiii. 17.* To this Purpose, *Job x. 11, 12. 1 Sam. ii. 4, 5.* and the Virgin in her Song, *Luke i. 51, 52.* Whatsoever Men bear themselves big upon, and begin to glory in, they call the Hand of God to crush it, raising an Idol of Jealousy in his Sight. All high Things have their Day, the Day of the Lord on all the Cedars of *Lebanon*, and he alone exalted. If ever this was the Case in any Time, we may see it is legible in ours, in great Letters. This the very Result of his Ways, staining the Pride of all Glory, defeating witty Counsels, making Counsellors mad, throwing down all Plumes and trampling them in the Mire, that no Part or Persons in the Kingdom can set out for any Triumph of Courage or Wit, or any other Excellency, but somewhat shall be clearly seen to meet, and dash it in pieces, that *no Flesh may glory before him*: And this to Souls that love God, is the main Happiness of the Times, and that wherein they will chiefly rejoice.

The Particular here spoken of is eminently suited to this End, the Choice and calling of Persons to the Dignity of Christians, *not many wise, &c.* but *the mean Things, &c.* and the most insignificant *Things that are not, non-entia*, very Nothings, to annul Things that seems most to be Something. Thus it was in the first Times; and though afterwards, by means of these meaner Persons, greater were caught and drawn into Christ, Philosophers and Kings, &c. yet still it remains true in all Times, that, predominantly, the Choice is of the meaner Sort, God testifying how little he esteems these Things that Men count great, these Endowments of Wit and Eloquence that Men admire in some: Alas! how poor are they to him; he respecteth not any who are wise in Heart; they are nothing, and less than nothing in his Eyes:

He is the Author of all these, *Job xxxiv. 19.* (Even wise Men admire how little it is that Men know, how small a Matter lies under the Sound of these popular Wonders, a learned Man, a great Scholar, a great Statesman: How much more doth the All-wise God meanly account of these; he often discovers, even to the World, their Meanness; he befools them.) So, Valour, or Birth, or worldly Greatness, these he gives, and gives as Things he makes no great reckoning of, to such as shall never see his Face; and calls to the Inheritance of Glory poor despised Creatures, that are look'd on as the *Offscourings* and Refuse of the World; those are *raised from the Dungbill* and *set with Princes*, made *the Sons and Daughters of God*, entitled each of them to a *Crown that fades not*. Oh the Wonder!

Now, they are not puffed up with this; but the more Assurance they have, and the clearer their View is of the State they are called to, the more humble they are; still laying these together, what was I in myself? and, what am I in Christ? And, in comparing these, they are swallowed up with Amazement at that Love that made this Change; and for this very End doth the Apostle express thus their Estate, *Ye are of him in Christ Jesus, &c.*

This is a new Being, a Creation; for, in relation to this Being, we are nothing in our *Naturals*; and then considering that, in relation to others, the meanest are often chosen and made Partakers of this Being, that having nothing naturally great of Nobility or Morality, or high Intellectuals, the most Nothings are often chosen, and made Partakers of this Being, to illustrate the Power of him that makes them exist. In Kings somewhat may be observed of this in their Choice of Favourites, and raising Men that are not of highest deserving, as affecting to shew their Freedom in Choice, and their Power in making out of nothing, and so they love to have them called their Creatures; but these are but Shadows, both are poor Creatures, both are easily thrown down: But God
doth

doth indeed shew in his Choice his Freedom and Power in his new Creature; he draws them out of the lowest Bottom of Nothing, and raises them to the most excellent kind of Being that Creatures are capable of, to be *the Sons of God, and so Heirs, joint Heirs with Christ Jesus, &c.*

Ye are of him in Christ Jesus, &c. This must be taken in an eminent Sense. All the Creatures are *of God*; but Man, even in his first Creation, for the Dignity of his Being, and slow Way of forming, was accounted to be *of God*, in a peculiar manner, formed to his own Likeness, and therefore called *the Son of God*, Acts xvii. called *his Offspring*. But in this new Being much more are we so; *we are of him* as his Children, Partakers of the Divine Nature, and that so fastned, that it abideth: And the Medium of this excellent and permanent Being is primely to be considered; for in him it becomes so. It is both high and firm, being in the natural Son, as the Foundation of it; therefore here exprest, as bearing the whole Weight of this happy Fabrick.

Of him ye are in Christ Jesus, &c. The Life which Believers derive from God is through him; he is that eternal Word, by which all Things were made, in their first Creation, and do still subsist, Heb. i. *John i.* And he is made the Basis of the second Creation, in a wonderful Way, becoming himself a Creature; and so the Root of the new Progeny is from Heaven, *the Sons of God*: So it follows in both these cited Scriptures, *John i. 12, 13, 14. the Word was made Flesh*; and so they that receive him are made the Sons of God. And so, Heb. ii. 10, 11, &c. amply and excellently is that Mystery unfolded. The first Frame of Man, at least, the Excellency and Beauty of it, was broken by his Fall; therefore a new Model is framed of a selected Number, to be a new World, more firm than the former, united unto God so close, as never to be severed again. Man, though he was made holy and God-like, continued not in that Honour. Now, God himself becomes a Man, to make all sure,

sure, that is the Foundation of an indissoluble Union, Man is knit to God in the Person of Christ so close, that there is no Possibility of dividing them any more; and this Union of our Nature in his Person is made the Ground of the Union of our Persons with God. We find our own Flesh in Christ catch hold of a Man, and in that may find God, and are made one with him by Faith in Christ; and this all the Powers of Hell cannot dissolve. Our Life none can cut off from his, more than a Man can cut a Beam from off the Sun. We are and subsist of God in Christ. This is an unknown Mystery, but, were it known, would prove a Depth of rich inexhaustible Consolation. The World doth not know what Christians are: This is no Wonder; for truly they know not themselves, or but very little. How would it elevate their Spirits, but not in Pride. Oh! nothing is more humbling than this, as the Apostle here implies; but it would raise them above the World, and suit their Desires and their Actions to their Condition, having all under Foot, that the World accounts great; walking as Heirs of Heaven, led and moved by the Spirit of Christ in them; thinking, when solicited to any base Way, how doth this become the Sons of God? Shall one that lives in Christ indignify him so much, as to borrow Comfort or Pleasure from any Sin, for the Killing and Destruction whereof he laid down his precious Life.

Oh! my Brethren, that this Divine Ambition were kindled in your Breasts, to partake of this high and happy Being, and leave all your Pursuits to follow this, restless till you be in Christ: For solid abiding Rest, sure I am, out of him there is none; and then, being in him, remember where you are, and what you are. *Walk in Christ*, and live like him, as one with him indeed; let his Thoughts and Desires be yours. What was his Work, yea, what his Refreshment, his Meat and Drink? To do his Father's Will. Oh! when shall we find ourselves so minded, as the Apostle's Word is, *the same Mind in us that was in Christ.*

Who

Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, &c.] Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning. It was not an accidental After-Device in God, (for in him there can be no such thing) but was his great fore-thought Project, out of the Ruins of Man's first Estate to raise a fairer and firmer Fabrick, new from the very Foundation. And in the new Foundation lies the Model and Excellency and Stability of the whole Structure. This is the Choice of all his Works, wherein he chiefly glories, his Master-piece, which great Angels admire; and this is it, *Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, &c.* and that is one Letter of his Name. He is called *Wonderful*, that is here spoke of; so all is wonderful in this Work: *Wonderful*, first, that he should be made any thing, the Maker of all things himself made something that before he was not, then *made to us*. That he should be made any thing, to our Interest and Advantage, who are a Company of Traitors, and *made unto us of God*, the God against whom we rebelled, and continued naturally Enemies. The Purpose bred in the Father's own Breast, to give out his Son from thence to recover us, and bring us back. O! astonishing Depth of Love! Then *made unto us*. What? What not? We made up in him, for ever rich and happy: He made all unto us, all we need, or can desire, *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*. Without him we are undone, forlorn Caitiffs, Masses of Misery, as you say, having nothing neither *in us nor on us*; nothing but Poverty and Wretchedness, Blindness and Nakedness, altogether ignorant of the Way to Happiness, yea, ignorant of our very Misery; a Nest of Fools, natural Fools, Children of Folly, (as they that are renewed by and provided with this Wisdom, are called *Children of Wisdom*) guilty, filthy, condemned Slaves.

This is the goodly Posture we are in, out of Christ; yet, who resents it? How few can be brought to serious Thoughts about it? Nay, are not the most in the Midst of this Misery, yet full of high Conceit of

their Worth, Wit, Freedom, &c. As frantick Bedlamites, lying naked and filthy in their Chains, yet dreaming they are great and wise Persons, commanding and ordering all about them, possibly, that they are Kings, a Stick in their Hands a Scepter, and their Iron Chains of Gold. This is a pleasing Madness for the Time; yet who does not pity it that looks on?

Methinks I see one of this Sort, when I see one evidently destitute of Christ, bearing himself big upon the Fancie of his Parts, and Birth, and Riches, or Stoutness, and upon any cross Word swelling against others, threatening high, and protesting they will be Slaves to none; not knowing that, even while they speak thus, they are wretched Caitiffs, under the hardest and basest kind of Slavery. Enquire, my Brethren, if ever you had a right and clear View of your natural Misery, otherwise you are, 'tis likely, still in it: And though you profess to believe in Christ, are not yet gone out of yourselves to him; and not knowing your great Need of him, do certainly make little Esteem and little Use of him. *You are full, and reign without him:* All is well and in quiet: but 'tis the *strong Man* yet possessing the House, and keeping you Captives as quiet as he can, that you look not out, or cry for a Deliverer: He is afraid of him, to be dispossessed and turned out by him that is stronger, the mighty Redeemer that came out of Zion. Oh! that many amongst you were crying to him, and waiting for him, to come unto you for your Rescue.

Made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.] To supply and help all, he is our Magazine, whither to have Recourse to; for this End replenish'd with *all the Fulness of God*, the very *Fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; the Spirit not given to him by Measure.* He is fit to be *made our Wisdom; the Wisdom of the Father*, as here in this Place the Apostle lately called him, *the Wisdom of God.* *In him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.*

edge. They that find him, and come in to him, find it so; but the most look but on the Superfice, they hear his Name, and know not what is under it.

Righteousness.] By fulfilling the whole Law, and all Righteousness, *Mattb. iii.* and yet suffering the Rigour of it, as if he had transgressed it: No Guile, no Spot was found on him; he was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners*, and yet the greatest Sinner by Imputation, (*white and ruddy*) *be laid on him the Iniquity of us all.* And *Psal. xl.* which is prophesied of him, *Mine Iniquities have taken hold on me;* he owns them as *his*, though *not his*, and endured all that Justice could require, enter'd and paid the Debt, and is acquitted and set free again, and *exalted at the Right Hand of God.* So 'tis evident that he is *righteous*, even in that *representative and sponsional Person* he put on.

Sanctification.] Christ is a living Spring of that, *anointed above his Fellows.* In him is no Mixture of any Iniquity. The Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles in *the Shape of Fire*: There was somewhat to be purged in them; they are to be quickned and enabled by it for their Calling: But in him, *as a Dove*, there was no need of cleansing or purging out any thing; that was a Symbol of the spotless Purity of his Nature, and of the Fulness of the Spirit dwelling in him.

And Redemption.] Christ is mighty to save, and having Right to save, a *Kinsman, a Brother*; and as he hath bought Freedom for Sinners, will put them in Possession of it, will effect and compleat it: All that are in him are really delivered from the Power of Sin and Death, and shall, e're long, be perfectly and fully so; they shall be lifted up above them, no longer to be molested with any Remainders of either, or with Fear of them, or so much as any Grief for them. And that Day is called *the Day of Redemption*, to which we are before-hand made sure, and sealed by the Spirit.

We cannot then doubt of his Fitness and Fulness to be these, *and these for us*; but withal, we must

know that he is designed so to be *made unto us*, and came, and did, and suffered all for this Purpose; and having done, returned, and now lives, *to be these to us*. 'Tis his Place and Office, and so his Delight; he loves to be put upon the Performance of this, to be their *Wisdom and Righteousness, made of God to us*. 'Tis agreed betwixt the Father and him that he be so: He is *the Wisdom of God*, and *made of God our Wisdom*. Wonderful! that the same that is his *own Wisdom*, and no less, he would *make ours*. And now, in a Sense of all our Ignorances and Follies, it becomes us to go to him, to apply ourselves to him, and apply him to us. He is called *our Head*, and so most fitly, for it is the Place of all our Wisdom, that lies in our Head. And all the rest, *Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*: If he be *Righteousness* in himself, and holy, and Victor over his Enemies, and set free from Wrath and Death; then are we so too in him, for he is *ours*, and so *ours*, that we become what he is, are inrighted to all he hath, and endowed with all his Goods; though poor and base in ourselves, yet married to him, that is the Title: We are made rich, and noble, and free: We are righteous and holy, because he is. * *The Wife shines with the Rays of her Husband*. All Debts and Pleas are taken off, he stands betwixt us and all Hazard, and in him we stand acquitted and justified before God.

That that makes up the Match, and ties the Knot of this Union, is Faith, *He is made of God unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, &c*, tendered and held out as all these, in the Promise of the Gospel; not only declared to be really furnished and fit so to be, but offered to be so, and we warranted, yea, invited and intreated to receive him as such; but he is effectually *made* to be this *to us, to me*, by believing, brought home and applied of God, and Faith wrought in the Heart to entertain and unite to him; † it closes the Bargain, and makes

* *Uxor fulget radiis mariti.*

† *Ἡ πίστις ἰσχυροῦται.*

makes him *ours*. Now, in that he is *made unto us*, not of *ourselves*, but *God*, for that is his Gift and Work, we cannot believe more than we can fulfil the whole Law; and though Men think it a common and easy Thing to accept of so sweet an Offer at so cheap a Rate, nothing being required but to receive him; yet this is a Thing that naturally all refuse: *No Man comes* (says he) *except the Father draw him*. Though Men be beseeched to come, yet the most *will not come unto me that they may have Life*. To as many as received him, he gave the Privilege to become the Sons of God: And yet for all that, many did not receive him; yea, as there it is expressed, *He came to his own, but his own received him not*. They that were nearest to him in natural Relation and Interest, yet refused him, for the most part, and attained not this blessed spiritual Interest in him unto Life.

It would be considered, my Brethren, Christ is daily held out, and none are excluded or excepted, all are invited, be what they will, that have Need of him, and Use for him; and yet who is persuaded? Oh! *Who hath believed our Report?* One hath his Farm, another his Oxen, each some Divertisement or another. Men are not at Leisure for Christ. Why? you think, may be, you have received him. If it be so, you are happy. Be not deluded. Have you received him? Do you find him then living and ruling within you? Are your Eyes upon him? Do you wait on him, early and late, to see what his Will is? Is your Soul glad in him? Can you, in Distress, Sicknes, or Poverty, clasp to him, and find him sweet, and allay all with this Thought, "However Things go with me, yet Christ is in me?" Doth your Heart cleave to him? Certainly, if he be in you, it will be thus; or, at least, your most earnest Desire will be, that it may be thus.

Men will not believe how hard a Matter it is to believe the Fulness and Sufficiency of Jesus Christ, till they be put to it in earnest to make Use of him; and then they find it, when Sin and

Death are set before their View, and discovered in their native Horridness unto the Soul, when a Man is driven to that, *What shall I do to be saved?* Then, then is the Time to know what Notion he hath of Christ. And as the Difficulty lies in this, in the first Awakening of the Conscience from Sin, so, in After-times of Temptation, and Apprehension of Wrath, when upon some new added Guiltiness, or a new Sight of the old, in a frightful Manner, *Sin revives, and the Soul dies*, 'tis struck dead with the Terrors of the Law: Then to keep thy Hold, and find another Life in Christ, the Law and Justice satisfied, and so the Conscience quieted in him, this is indeed to believe.

'Tis a Thing of huge Difficulty to bring Men to a Sense of their natural Misery, to see that they have Need of a Saviour, and to look out for one; but then being brought to that, 'tis no less, if not more difficult, to persuade them that Christ is he; that as they have Need of him, so they need no more, he being able and sufficient for them. All the Waverings and Fears of misbelieving Minds do spring from dark and narrow Apprehensions of Jesus Christ. All the Doubt is not of their Interest, as they imagine; they who say so, and think it is so, do not perceive the Bottom and Root of their own Malady: They say, they do no whit doubt but that he is able enough, and his Righteousness large enough; but all the Doubt is, *if he belong to me*. Now, I say, this Doubt arises from a Defect and Doubt of the former, wherein you suspect it not. Why doubts thou that he belongs to thee? Dost thou fly to him, as lost and undone in thyself? Dost thou renounce all that can be called thine, and seek thy Life in him? Then he is *thine*. *He came to seek and to save that which was lost*. Oh! But I find so much, not only former, but still daily renewed and increasing Guiltiness. Why? Is he a sufficient Saviour? Or, is he not? If thou dost say, he is not, then it is manifest, that here lies the Defect and Mistake; If thou say'st, he is, then hast thou answered

swered all thy Objections of that Kind ; much Guiltiness, much or [little, old or new, neither helps nor hinders, as to thy Interest in him, and Salvation by him. And for dispelling of these Mists, nothing can be more effectual than the letting in of these Gospel Beams, the clear Expressions of his Riches and Fullness in the Scriptures, and eminently this, *made of God, Wisdom, Righteousness.*

Wisdom.] Both *objectively* and *effectively*. *Objectively*, I mean, all *our* Wisdom, to be in the right Knowledge and Apprehension of him ; and this suits to the Apostle's present Discourse. The *Jews* would have a *Sign*, and the *Gentiles*, *Wisdom* ; but we preach *Christ* : So *Chap. ii. I determined to know nothing, save Christ crucified.* He was learnedly bred, and knew many Things beside ; much of Nature, and much of the Law : But all this was to him overdated, useless Stuff ; it was as if he never had heard of, nor known any thing else but Jesus Christ. We may know other Things ; but this, and this alone, is our Wisdom, *to know him, and him crucified* : Particularly, we may have Knowledge of the Law, and by it the Knowledge of Sin ; but in Relation to our standing before God, and so our Happiness, which is the greatest Point of Wisdom, Jesus Christ is alone, and is all. And the more firmly a Soul eyes Christ, and loses all other Knowledge, and itself in contemplating him, the more truly wise and heavenly it is.

And *effectively* he is our Wisdom. All our right Knowledge of him, and Belief in him, flows from himself, is derived from him, and sent into our Souls. His Spirit is conveyed into ours ; a Beam of himself, as of the Sun : This Sun of Righteousness is not seen but by his own Light ; so that every Soul that is made wise unto Salvation, that is brought to apprehend Christ, to cleave to him, and repose on him, it is by an Immission of divine Light from himself, that shews him, and leads unto him. And so we know God in him. There is no right Knowledge

of the Father but in the Son; God dwelling in the *Man Christ*, will be found or known no where else; and they that consider, and worship God out of Christ, do not know or worship the true God, but a false Notion and Fancy of their own.

The *Shechina*, the *Habitation of the Majesty*, is Jesus Christ; there he dwells as between the Cherubims over the Mercy-Seat. To apprehend God so, is to love him, and trust in him all our Life, to hope to find Favour and Bliss with him; this is the only wise Knowledge of him: Now, this alone is in Christ, and from him. He contains this Representation of God, and gives his own Light to see it; so that a Christian's Desire would be, in Relation to Jesus Christ, that of *David* to the Temple, as a Figure of him, *One Thing have I desired of him, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord*; that I may get into Christ, to know God there, to *behold the Beauty of the Lord*. There we see Beauty indeed, the Father's Glory, and so as *our Father*, reconciled to us, we see him *merciful and gracious*. And as to *behold*, so still to *enquire* in his Temple, to advance in the Knowledge of God, studying him in Christ; to admire what we see, and seek still to see more. And to know that this Knowledge of God, as we have it *in Christ*, so *from him*. He reveals the Father; he came from his Bosom for that Purpose. We cannot believe on him, cannot come near God through him, but as he lets forth of his Light, to conduct and lead us in, yea, powerfully to draw in, for his Light does so. Now, knowing and apprehending him by his own Light, his Spirit, the Apostle clears it, that this is our *Wisdom* by those rich Titles added: According to which we find him to us, when we receive from him that Wisdom, by which we apprehend him aright, and lay hold on him; then *made unto us Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*.

Righteousness.] This doubtless is meant of the Righteousness by which we are justified before God; and

and he is *made this to us*, applied by Faith: *His Righteousness becomes ours*. That Exchange made, our Sins are laid over upon him, and his Obedience put upon us. This, the great glad Tidings, that we are made righteous by Christ: 'Tis not a Righteousness wrought by us, but given to us, and put upon us. This carnal Reason cannot apprehend, and being proud, therefore rejects and argues against it; says, *How can this Thing be?* But Faith closes with it, and rejoices in it; without either Doing or Suffering, the Sinner is acquitted and justified, and stands as guiltless of Breach, yea, as having fulfilled the whole Law. And happy they that thus fasten upon this Righteousness; they may lift up their Faces with Gladness and Boldness before God: Whereas the most industrious self-saving Justiciary, though in other Mens Eyes and his own, possible for the present, he makes a glistering Shew, yet when he shall come to be examined of God, and tried according to the Law, he shall be covered with Shame, and confounded in his Folly and Guiltiness. But Faith triumphs over Self-unworthiness, and Sin, and Death, and the Law, shrowding the Soul under the Mantle of Jesus Christ; and there it is safe: all Accusations fall off, having no where to fasten, unless some Blemish could be found in that Righteousness in which Faith hath wrapt itself. This is the very Spring of solid Peace, and fills the Soul with Peace and Joy. But still Men would have something within themselves to make out the Matter, as if this Robe needed any such piecing; and not finding what they desire, thence Disquiet and Unsettlement of Mind arises.

True it is, that this Faith purifies the Heart, and works Holiness, and all Graces flow from it: But in this Work of justifying the Sinner, it is alone, and cannot admit of any Mixture, as *Luther's* Resemblance is, "Faith is as the Bride with Christ in the Bed-Chamber alone; but when she cometh forth, " hath the Attendance and Train of other Graces
" with

“with her.” This well understood, the Soul that believes on Jesus Christ, will not let go, for all Deficiency in itself; and yet so resting on him, will not be slothful nor regardless of any Duty of Holiness: Yea, this is the Way to abound in all the Fruits of the Spirit, first, to have that Wisdom from him, rightly to apprehend and apply him as our *Righteousness*, and then shall we find all Furniture of Grace in him; he will likewise be *Sanctification*. Say not, “Unless I find some Measure of *Sanctification*, what right have I to apply him as “my *Righteousness*?” This inverts the Order, and prejudices thee of both. Thou must first, without finding, yea, or seeking any Thing in thyself but Misery and Guiltiness, lay hold on him as thy *Righteousness*; or else thou shalt never find *Sanctification* by any other Endeavour or Pursuit.

He it is that is *made Sanctification to us*, and out of him we seek it in vain. Now, first, He must be *thy Righteousness*, before thou find him *thy Sanctification*: Simply, as a guilty Sinner, thou must fly to him for Shelter; and then, being come in, thou shalt be furnish'd out of his Fulness, with *Grace for Grace*. As a poor Man pursued by the Justiciary, flying to a strong Castle for Safety, and being in it, finds it a rich Palace, and all his Wants supplied there.

This misunderstanding of that Method is the Cause of much of that Darkness and Discomfort, and withal of that Deadness and Defect of Graces, that many Persons go drooping under, who will not take this Way the only streight and sure Way of Life and Comfort. Now,

[*Sanctification.*] He is to us not only as a perfect Pattern, but as a powerful Principle. 'Tis really the Spirit of Christ in a Believer, that crucifies the World, and purges out Sin, and forms the Soul to his Likeness. It is impossible to be holy, not being in him; and being truly in him, it is as impossible not to be holy: Our pothering and turmoiling

without

without him, makes us lose our Labour; and in this Point indeed, *Little Wit makes much Labour.*

Redemption.] Sin is often prevailing, even in Believers; and therewithal Discomforts and Doubts arising, as it cannot otherwise chuse: Oh! how do they groan and sigh as Captives still to the Law of Sin and Death. Well, there is in our Lord Jesus Help for that too, He is *Redemption*, that is, the Complement and Fulness of Deliverance, the Price he paid once for all. Now he goes on to work that Deliverance by Conquest, that he bought by Ransom: It is going on, even when we feel it not; and within a little while it shall be perfected, and we shall see all the Host of our Enemies that pursued us, as *Israel* saw the *Ægyptians*, ly dead upon the Shore. Courage! that Day is coming; and all this, that *be that glories, may glory in the Lord*: Is it not reasonable? No Self-glorying; the more Faith, the less still of that. A Believer is nothing in himself: All is Christ's: Christ is his All; (that Treasurer, that being called to an Account, because that out of nothing he had enriched himself suddenly, many thought he would have been puzzled with it; but he, without being much moved, next Morning came before the King in an old Suit that he wore before he got that Office, and said, "Sir, this Suit on my Back is mine, but all the rest is thine:" So our old Suit is ours, all the rest Christ's and he allows it well) and in the full and pure Glory that ascends to God in this Work, are we to rejoice more than in the Work itself, as our Salvation. There is an humble kind of boasting that becomes a Christian, *My Soul shall glory, or make her Boast in God*, says *David, all the Day long*. What was I before I met with Christ? thinks a Believer: And now what am I? And, upon that Thought, wonders and loves. But most of the Wonder is yet to come; for he conceives but little what we shall be.

S E R M O N VI.

JEREMIAH X. 23, 24.

*O Lord, I know that the Way of Man is not in himself;
it is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps.*

*O Lord, correct me, but with Judgment; not in thine
Anger least thou bring me to nothing.*

IT cannot be expressed what an Advantage a Heart acquaint with God hath, in all the Revolutions and Changes of the World, when it turns in to him, and gives Vent to its Grievs and Desires into his Bosom, and so finds Ease. This the Prophet does here, after denouncing of a heavy Judgment, he turns towards him from whom he brought that Message, to entreat for them to whom he brought it. After a very sad Close of his Sermon, he adds this short but very sweet Prayer; presents himself, and speaks in that Stile, as representing the whole People, *Correct me, O Lord*; makes their Calamity, as it were, all his own, bears their Person, and presents his Petition for them in his own Name. The Prophets, though they could not but applaud and approve the Justice of God that sent them in the harshest News they brought; yet withal could not be insensible of the Miseries of his People. And so we find them mixing pathetical Complaints and Prayers for them, with the Predictions of Judgments against them.

Obser. And thus are all his faithful Ministers affected towards his Church. The Lord himself is pleased to express a kind of Regret, sometimes in the punishing of them. As the tender-hearted Father feels the Lashes he lays on, though highly deserved by the Stubbornness of his Children, *Hos. xi. 8. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall*

Shall I make thee as Zeboim? Mine Heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together. So it well becomes his Servants to be thus affected, when they deliver sad News to his People, to return Praying for them: Thus going as Angels betwixt Heaven and Earth, beseeching the People to return unto God, and beseeching God to return to his People, and spare them.

The Prophet, in this Prayer, first premises a *Position* suiting his Purpose; and then, upon that, presents his *Supplication*. The *Position* he lays, to make a double Benefit of it in order to his *Petition*. 'Tis both a sure Ground for himself to stand on, and a fit Argument to move God by. Thus it is, and thus he intends and uses it, at once to support his own Faith, and work on the Goodness of God by it. Beside the Finess of the Truth itself for both these Ends, we find some Print of both, in the very Way of expressing it, *O Lord, I know that the Way of Man is not in himself, &c.* so expressing both his own Persuasion of the Truth of it, *I know*, and representing it to God, as a fit Truth to urge his Suit by, *O Lord, I know*.

Obfer. A great Part of the Strength and Art of Prayer lies in this, first, to have the Mind furnish'd with fit Conceptions of God, and establish'd in the firm Persuasions of them; in that is much of the Strength of Prayer: Then fitly to call up, and use these Conceptions and Persuasions, for our own supporting and prevailing with God; in that lies the Art of it.

We possibly do think that we do sufficiently believe both the Goodness and Power of God, especially his Power, none suspecting himself of the least Doubt of it: yet our perplexing Doubts and Fears, our feeble Staggerings in Faith and Prayer, upon particular pressing Difficulties, discover evidently a Defect here, though still we will not own it. And alas! how little Faculty have we in the most needful Times, to rest on his Strength, and to stir up ourselves,

ourselves, to stir him up by Prayer, to do for us, holding firm to that great Point of his absolute Sovereignty and Power over all Things, and holding it up to him, entreating him by it to appear and work for us: "Lord, it is in thy Hand; that I know," and that is enough to me: Thy Good-will I dare "trust," (for there is implied a secret Confidence of that) "this contents me, that thou hast full Power "of the Business." That is the Thing here the Prophet fixes on, *O Lord, I know that the Way of Man is not in himself.*

"As there is in us no Power to turn off the Judgment determined, all our Wit and Strength can do nothing to that; so we are sure there is no Power in our Enemies to do any thing, either beyond or beside thy Appointment, in the Execution of it: And upon this, Lord, we come to supplicate thee for Mitigation. With Men it often falls out, either in just Punishments, or unjust Oppressions, that the Ministers and Under-Officers do exceed their Commission, and overdo their Business; yea, sometimes add little less of their own, than all that comes to, that is appointed to them; But with thee, O Lord, it is not so. As our Enemies cannot stir of themselves without Order from thee; and as thy Commissions are always just, so thou seest to the Performance, art present at it, which often Men cannot be: And so nothing is or can be done beside thy Notice and Allowance."

His Position is this; *The Way of Man is not in himself*; and repeated more plainly, *it is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps.* Thus, by a double Negation, putting it altogether out of his Power; and under this the positive Truth is couched, that the absolute Disposal of all the Ways of Men is wholly in the supreme Hand of God; according to that, *Prov. xx. 24. Man's Goings are of the Lord.* How can a Man then understand his Way? He doth not certainly know any thing of his own Doings; even he that seems to know most, to advise and de-

liberate

liberate upon all he does, yet hath no Power of his Contrivements, knows not which Way they will turn, till the Event doth clear it; and even then, looking back, is often amazed at the strange Course of Things, so far different from, and possibly contrary to all his witty Projectings and Models, often does not attain *his own*, but never fails to accomplish God's Purpose, even when his Intentions are least for it, yea, when they are most against it: *Let us build a Tower*, said they, *Gen. xi. lest we be scattered abroad*; and that was the very Thing caused their Scattering. *Joseph was sold by his Brethren*, that they might not bow before him, as he had dreamed; and this brought it to pass. *Pharaoh says, Let us deal wisely*. And that Way of oppressing them, lest they should go away, both stir'd up God to deliver them, and disposed them to depart. And not to multiply Instances, generally in all the Ways of Men, they have their Designs most times excentrick to God's; but his holds always, and theirs no further, than they are his. Have we not ourselves seen Instances of this?

Man consults and determines freely; yet even these inward Actings of the Mind and Will, are ordered and framed by the Hand of God, and it cannot otherwise be. It is a most vain Fancy, to imagine that any thing in this is inconsistent with the natural Liberty of his Will, or that any such Liberty can be in any Creature, as consists not with his; but because in these inward Actings, Man finds himself more at his Choice, though all is secretly over-ruled, and in the Event of Things, God's sovereign Dispose is more legible; therefore these two are exprest with some kind of Difference, *Prov. xvi. 9. A Man's Heart deviseth his Way, but the Lord directs his Steps*: That is, when he hath devised, that does not carry it; (he may devise and fancy Things twenty Ways, and think he is taking freely his own Course, but he shall find in the Issue another Hand than his own. *It is not in Man that walks*, as the Word is here. *he walketh*, and yet the Direction of his Steps is in another.

another Hand.) But in the Devifings too, the Lord fo acts Man, that he is turned which Way it pleafeth him; even the Heart, and that of the moft uncontrouled, the moft impetuous Torrent, *The King's Heart is in his Hand, as the Rivers of Waters, &c.* When Men either determine themfelves, or follow unhallowed Ways for Determination, as thofe, *Ezek. xxi. 21.* yet are they ordered of God. This he does infallibly and uncontroulably, yet in fuch a Way as there is nothing diftorted or violented*. All is fo done; Things are in their own Courfe, and Men are in their voluntary Choices, yet all fubferving the great Lord, and his Ends, and his Glory, that made them all for himfelf; (as the lower Orbs have each their Motion, but are all wheeled about with the firft: Men know not what he is doing by them, and what in the End he will do with them, *Ifa. x. With the Rod of Affyria* he fcourges his Children, and then throws the Rod in the Fire, *Ver. 15, 16.* The Horfe-leech draws the Blood to fill itfelf, but the Phyfician intends the Patient's Health.) Men are drawn on by temporal Prosperings and Successes to drive proudly and furiously, till they drive themfelves over the Edge of the Precipice appointed for their Ruin; and all his exalting them for a Season, is, in End, to exalt himfelf in their greater and more remarkable Destruction. *I will get me a Name upon Pharaob, and all his Hof.* Men are busy, consulting or acting with or againft one another, and he fits and laughs at their wifeft Plots; he alone is in all Affairs, doing all his own Will in Heaven and in Earth.

Oh! the Folly and Blindnefs of Men, that think to carry all to their Minds, and walk as Mafters of their own Defigns, and never have any ferious Thought of him, in whose Hands both they, and all their Bufinefs, and all the Affairs of States and Kingdoms of this World, are as a Piece of Wax, to frame them to what he pleafes. He that *destroys the Counfels of the Wife, and makes the Diviners mad, that pours Contempt upon Princes, leads Counfellors away*

* Fortiter & fuaviter.

spoiled, and maketh the Judges Fools: He that hath set Limits to all Things, to the raging of the Sea, makes the small Sand give Check to the great Ocean, when it *brake out of the Womb*, he had a Cradle provided for it, and swadling Bands, *Job xxxviii.* and there, though it rolls to and fro, yet cannot get out. Oh! it is Ignorance of God makes Men rush on, and not enquire whether he be with them or no. *Moses* was wise and stout, and Leader of a numerous People, yet he would not stir on other Terms; *If thou go not with us, let us not go up hence:* Well, if Men will on their Peril, be it; let us reverence God; for even this is from him, and he will gain his Glory out of it. *The Way of Man is not in himself.* If we see their Folly, let us learn to be wiser, to keep close to him, and desire his gracious Direction of our Ways; for it is not in our Hands, even when we intend best. And for publick Affairs, let us rest satisfied in his Part. Amidst all Disorders, he is ordering all wisely and justly, and to them that love him, graciously; therefore we ought not to be dismayed. Let us calm our Thoughts with this, Remember who it is that rules all, and disposes of Peace and War, and all Affairs, and we cannot wish them in a better Hand. I am persuaded, that in all the Commotions of the World, when a Believer thinks on this, it cannot but calm and compose his Spirit exceedingly, *My Father rules all.* Let this so quiet our Fears, as that withal it quickens our Prayers, and stir us up to the Work of this Day, repentant humble seeking unto God; seeing all is in his Hands, our Peace, our Liberties, and our Enemies that threaten to bereave us of both. Oh! that the Effect of all our Troubles and Dangers were to drive us more to God, to make us throng more about the Throne of Grace, to draw forth our King for our Help. Oh! our Impenitence and Unreformedness, that turns him to be our Enemy, that only, Men are nothing; and now in so great Straits, yet so little calling on him! Oh! my Brethren, what are we doing? O! Pray, pray; it is

our God that commands all; and we may say it, upon his own Warrant, *It is Prayer that commands him.*

Correct me, &c.] When the Hand of God is stretched out against a People or a Person, certainly there is no running from him: The only wise and safe Course is, to run in to him; this the Prophet does in Behalf of his People, and by his Example teaches them so to do. As the Prophet utters his own Sense and Desires in this Prayer, so he sets it as a Copy to the People of God, in time of Judgment, to pray by, shews them the Way, which is not vainly to offer to fly from him, or proudly to stand out against him, to their Undoing, but to humble themselves under his mighty Hand, supplicating him, yielding themselves, and begging Quarter, *Correct me, O Lord, with Judgment, not in Anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.* That I suffer for my Rebellion, good Reason; yet, Lord, do not utterly destroy me; which will be, if the Weight of thine Anger fall upon me: And for that, tho' indeed we have deserved it, yet there is *another Vent for it*, and pardon us to say so, *fitter Matter for it.* *Pour out thy Wrath upon the Heathen;* let it go out that Way. So we see the Supplication hath these two Particulars in it, an *Aversion* and a *Diversion*: An *Aversion* of the Anger of God from his own People under Correction; and a *Diversion* of it upon his and their Enemies: *Lord, turn from us, and pour it out there.* The *Aversion* is presented, qualified with a humble Submission, declaring expressly they decline not that Correction of God, but only deprecate his consuming Anger.

Correct me, O Lord, but with Judgment, that is, with Measure; such as the Discretion and Love of a Father resolves on towards his Child: Thus much will I correct him for his Good, and no further.

Not in thine Anger. God is pleased to express his Displeasure against Sin, by Wrath and Anger, even towards his own Children: But the Anger here the Prophet entreats Exception from for the Church, is Anger opposed to Judgment, unbounded destroying Anger,

Anger, that knows no Limits nor Stop, but the devouring of these against whom it is kindled. This is spoken in our Language, but is to be understood in a Way suiting the Purity of God. In him truly is no Passion at all, much less any that is not ordered by Wisdom and Judgment. He is not carried in Heat beyond his purposed Measure, but knows well how far he intends to go with any, and goes no further. But as his Anger means his just punishing of Sin, so his unlimited Anger signifies no other but his just proceeding in Punishment, to the utter Destruction of inflexible Sinners; and to this is opposed here his *correcting with Judgment*, that is, in a fatherly gracious Moderation, such as does not utterly ruin and cut off, but indeed reclaims and converts Sinners unto him.

This Submission and Yieldance to a measured Correction, is a thing most reasonable; they that know any thing aright of themselves and God, will not refuse it.

First, Reflecting on their own Sinfulness, which when truly discovered, even where there is least, yet is there enough of it to justify even utter Destruction: Therefore have we good Reason, unrepiningly to receive such moderate Correction from the Hand of God, as he thinks fit, and to wonder that it is no more. 'Tis one true Character of Repentance under the Rod, to *accept the Punishment of our Iniquity*, to have our untamed Spirits brought low, to stoop to God, to acknowledge our Punishment to be far less than our Iniquity; and that it is of his Goodness that we are not consumed, as the Church confesses. Though we feel it heavy, and the Measure hard, yet Self-knowledge and Conscience of Sin will lay the Soul low, and make it quiet, will say nothing, or if any thing, it will be the Confession of its own Guiltiness, and the Righteousness of God; still clearing him in all, as it is *Psal. li. 4*, and using that other, *Psal. cxix*, whatsoever is so inflicted, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, just are thy Judgments*:

Which Words a good King used, being put in Prison, and hardly dealt with; so the Psalmist, Psalm xxxviii. 3. (*There is no Soundness in my Flesh, because of thine Anger, neither is there any Rest in my Bones because of my Sin*) justifies God's Anger by his own Sin. Thus Daniel makes Confession for this People, under the very Captivity here threatned, when it had lasted out the full Term, Dan. ix.

And knowing our Sin, ought we not to allow God the clearing of his own Justice, his Purity and Hatred of Sin, in punishing it, and possibly most exemplarily here, in those that are nearest him, his own People and Children, can least endure it there. This, especially, when we consider his Sovereignty and Greatness, that he is tied to no Account of his Actings; and though we did not see so clear Reason for our Sufferings in our Deservings, there is Reason enough in his Will. And this, well considered, would bring us to much humble Submission in all. *I was dumb* says David, *I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it.* The Bishop of Troyes meeting Attila marching towards the City, asked who he was? *I am*, said he *the Scourge of God*, and caused set open the Gates to him; but God marvellously restrained the Soldiers in that City.

But yet further, as our own Guiltiness, and God's Righteousness and Greatness, plead for this Compliance with his Chastisements; so even his Goodness, and our own Profit, in them. There is in his chastising of his own People very much Mercy, that they may not be condemned with the World. Their Afflictions have a secret Stamp of Love on them; *By this is the Iniquity of Jacob purged*, &c. He purifies a People in his Furnace, that they may be holy unto him, gives his own many sweet Experiences of secret Support and Comfort in Affliction and seasonable Delivery out of it, and brings them forth with Advantage, *The peaceable Fruits of Righteousness*, Heb. xii. He humbles and purges a People or Person, by his Rods, and prepares them for greater

er Mercies to enjoy them, both more sweetly and usefully; renews his Covenant, and the mutual Endearments of Love betwixt himself and his People; according to the gracious Promises made to his People, in relation to this very Judgment here threatned, and after inflicted on them, *Isa. liv. Ezek. xxxvi.*

We, possibly, think it strange that our Pressures and Troubles still continue, and rather grow upon us than abate: But we *judge not wisely concerning this*; the most part cursing and repining, others falling in to a dead hopeless Stupidness, not caring what become of Things: But our best Course were, to turn to him that smites us, to acknowledge our Rebelions and his Justice, to eye Men less and God more, in our Sufferings, and confess that our Provocations exceed all that is to come upon us, to fall down humbly before God, and take submissively with his Chastisements, *Correct me, O Lord, but with Judgment, &c. and with the Church, I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, Mic. vii.* Thus likewise, in private personal Correctings, let us learn to behave ourselves meekly and humbly, as the Children of so great and good a Father; whatsoever he inflicts, not to murmur, nor entertain a fretful Thought of it. Besides the Undutifulness and Unseemliness of it, how vain is it? What gain we by struggling, and casting up our Hand, to cast off the Rod, but the more Lashes? Our only Way is to kneel, and fold under his Hands, and kiss his Rods, and, even while he is smiting us, to be blessing him, sending up Confessions of his Righteousness, and Goodness, and Faithfulness, only entreating for the turning away of his Wrath, though it should be with the continuing our Affliction; that is here the Stile of the Prophet's Prayer, *Correct me, O Lord, but not in Anger*: And, according to this Suit, even where Troubles are Chastisements for Sin, yet a Child of God may find much Sweetness; reading much of God's Love in so dealing with them; not suffering

them to grow wanton, and forget him; as in much Ease, even his own Children sometimes do: And as they may find much of God's Love to them in sharp Corrections, they may raise and act much of their Love to him in often-repeated Resignments and Submissions of themselves, and ready consenting to, yea, rejoicing in his good Pleasure, even in these Things that to their Flesh and Sense are most unpleasant.

Now, to the *Petition*, the averting of his Anger. That is the great Request of them that know and fear him; and there is high Reason for it, the heaviest Sufferings are light without it. But the least Ingredient of that adds inexpressible Weight to the smallest Affliction. This was the Thing, likely, made the Visage of Death so sad to holy Men in Scripture, *David, Hezekiah, &c.* that at these Times it had some Character of God's Anger against them upon it, came to them as a Messenger of Displeasure: So a Thing small in itself may be a great Curse. To be cast out unburied is no great Matter, natural Men slight it*; there is little Difference, to ly eaten of Beasts above Ground, or of Worms beneath: Yea when foretold to a Man as a Judgment denounced from God, as against that King, *Jer. xxii. 19.* it hath its own Weight, carrying some Stamp of God's despising him: and though a Man feels it not when it is done, yet he feels it, looking on it before-hand, especially as threatned of God, sees himself, as it were, dragged about and torn.

Now if any little particular Cross mark'd with God's present Anger become so heavy, how much more is his abiding prolonged Wrath? The Thing here spoken of, *Anger*, to which no Bounds is set, that (says he, in Name of his People) *would bring me to nought*; there is no standing before it, it will make the stoutest and proudest to shake, yea, shakes them to pieces. If the *Wrath of a King* be to meaner Men as the roaring of a Lion, how much more terrible, even to Kings themselves, is the Wrath of God?

This

* *Calo tegitur, qui non habet urnam.*

This great King, whose *Voice shakes the Mountains*, and makes the Earth *to tremble*, Armies of Terrors and Deaths are nothing to a Look of his angry Countenance. *If he withdraws his Anger*, Job ix. *the proud Helpers stoop under him*; the Helpers of Pride, the great *Atlafs's* of the World, that are thought to bear up all those, that are for their Wit and Power are thought the Supporters of the Kingdoms, how soon are they crush'd to pieces by a Touch of this Anger of God, and *perish at the Rebuke of his Countenance*? O Lord, says that holy Man, (considering the Frailty of poor Man, and the Power of God) *who knows the Power of thine Anger*, Psal. xc. *even according to thy Fear so is thy Wrath*; full as much, yea far more terrible than any can apprehend it.

They that dare go on in Ways, wherein it may be but suspected that he is against them, Oh! they know him not. Let us consider, and fear before him; and, for the Land, still entreat the turning away of his Wrath, rather than Deliverances from any Pressures. "Lord, while thou thinkest good further to afflict us, so as to draw us nearer to thee, we are content; yea, we shall bless thee: But whatsoever thou do with us, suffer not thy hot Displeasure to arise against us, for then we are undone." So this is all a Soul under his Hand, in Affliction, ought to say, *Correct me, but not in Wrath, lest thou bring me to nothing*: "Thou knowest I cannot stand before that." He is pleased to look to this, and to express it, as that which moderates his Anger, even when justly incensed, *Isa. lvii. 16, I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the Spirit should fail before me, and the Souls which I have made, to lay this before him*, "Lord, if thou wilt, how quickly and how easily couldst thou break into Pieces, or sink into nothing, not only me, a little Atom of it, but the entire Frame of this whole World, and therefore strive not with me." This often *Job* represents, and God is pleased to move himself, to restrain his Wrath, and to draw

forth his Mercy by it, *Psal. lxxv. 38, 39.* and *Psal. ciii. 14.* his great Compassion lays hold on such Considerations; and this may furnish great Confidence to Souls under a Sense of Wrath, that do but fall down and entreat for Mercy. He that so often prevents us, when we seek it not, will he cast any away that seeks and suits for it?

The *Diversion*, briefly, is to the Heathen, the professed and obdured Enemies of God and his Church:
 “Thy Wrath, O Lord, may have its Course, and
 “yet spare thy People: There is Matter enough
 “for it round about, good for nothing else, and
 “good Reason for it, besides all other Wickedness,
 “their Spite and Cruelty against thy People, *for they*
 “*have eaten up Jacob.*”

Next, the Character of the Ungodly, that are fit Fewel for this Fire, *that know not, and call not on thy Name*, that profess not, pretend not to be thine. Tremble you that are too like these, though reputed amongst the People of God. Seek the Knowledge of God, and worship him, Families and Persons, lest this Curse come upon you.

Now, this propheticall foretelling the utter Destruction of the Church's Enemies, whereas the Church is *corrected in measure*, and not destroyed: She is first punished; but they that come last, the Enemies, the heaviest Wrath falls down there, and smothers them, ends on them, and makes an End of them, *Jer. xxx. 11.* The Belief of this may uphold the Faithful in the Church's greatest Distresses. When at the lowest, then the Wrath is nearest changing Place, and removing to her Enemies.

And this is to be so desired and prayed for, in Reference to the implacable Enemies of God, that we beware we mix nothing of our own Interest or Passion with it: as Wrath in God is without any Disturbance*; so somewhat like is the Desire of it in the Godly, calm undistempered Love of the Name of God. And so shall the Saints rejoice in the final Victory and Triumph of Christ over all his Enemies,

* *Æstuas & tranquillus es,*

and their final Ruin in that Day, when they shall be made his Footstool: Then they shall have a pure Complacency and Delight in his Justice, (that shall make all even;) and why are we disquieted, if we hope for that Day?

S E R M O N VII.

ISAIAH XXX. 15—19.

For thus saith the Lord God, the holy One of Israel, in Returning and Rest shall ye be saved, in Quietness and in Confidence shall be your Strength; and ye would not.

But ye said, No, for we will flee upon Horses, therefore shall ye flee: And we will ride upon the swift, therefore shall they that pursue you, be swift:

One thousand shall flee at the Rebuke of one: At the Rebuke of five shall ye flee, till ye be left as a Beacon upon the Top of a Mountain, and as an Ensign on an Hill.

And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have Mercy upon you: For the Lord is a God of Judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.

IN the Sentence of that greatest and biggest Judgment that ever yet came on the World, the universal Deluge, as we have it, *Gen. vi.* that Word doth most lively express the Reason of it, *My Spirit shall not alway strive with Man:* For thus it is, while he spares even his own People, he is at a continual Strife with them, by gracious Entreaties and Mercies, by Advices and Warnings and Threatnings, still contesting; that is the Way he uses in the Contest, on his Part, against Refuses and Revolts and Rebellions on their Part. Thus here.

The

The Question betwixt him and his People here, is about the Help of *Egypt*: This God often declares to be wholly against his Mind, and their own Good; yet they on all Occasions had so strong a Mind to it, that they could not be diverted. The Prophet here hath his Message concerning this Point, to preach it, and to write it, to remain *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*, as they speak, *Ver. 7, 8.* shews them plainly, that this Course was wholly without the Counsel and Consent of God, yea, directly against it, and that it should succeed accordingly: *The Strength of Pharoah shall be their Shame, and their Trust in the Shadow of Egypt their Confusion*; it shall prove to you according to its Name, *a Land of Distress, Ver. 6. and Trouble*, instead of Help. And if you'd know what would suit that other Name of *Egypt* better, that were humble Yieldance to God, and Confidence in him, *Ver. 7.* your *Rahab*, your best *Egypt*, your truest Strength were, to sit still: This is here again represented to them, so gladly would he reclaim them.

For thus saith the Lord.] The Words have, 1st, God's express *Advise* to his People. 2^{dly}, Their peremptory *Refuse* of it. 3^{dly}, His just *Sentence* past upon their *Obstinacy*. The *Advice* prefaced with the usual Words of the Prophets, *Thus saith the Lord*; for in that lies the Dignity and Authority of the Message. His *Advices*, doubtless, are the choicest and the safest; yea, his *Counsels* are all *Commands*, requiring duly the most absolute *Obedience*.

The Lord Jehovah. Were but his Word known to be his, and taken so, how would our Souls melt, and yield to the Impressions of it, when we read or hear? Oh! learn to hear him, to take every Word of his as from his Mouth, every time the Law is read, as if thou heard it from Mount *Sinai*. So think, "Now God commands me to fear him," as if you heard him speaking from Heaven; that would level more our Opinion of Men, and make less Difference of his Messengers.

Another Word of his stile is here added, *the holy One of Israel*. This is much to be considered by his People, the Holiness of his Nature, and withal the Nearness of his Relation to them; and so the Reverence and Obedience we owe him, our deep Engagement to Holiness, as his People, his Children. This is his Image in us, if we are truly such. All his Sons and Daughters are like him, holy as he is holy. The blind base World thinks it a Word of Disgrace, but the great God owns it as a chief Point of his Glory, a Diamond of his Crown, and frequently expresses it as one of the Titles he most delights to be known by, *holy, holy, holy*. And as this is beheld, the Heart cannot but be filled with Reverence and holy Fear, and Self-abasement; as this Prophet here, in seeing the Vision, *Chap. xvi.* and hearing that Voice, *Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone.*

This is here used fitly, to scar his People from Rebellion, the unholy Way, on which they were so bent; and the rather, because they were grown weary of it, and desired to hear this Word, *Ver. 11.* therefore the more repeated, *Ver. 12.* *Because you despise this Word, you shall hear it the more.* The Prophet will neither be mocked nor threatned out of it, will both deliver his Message, and give the King that sent him his own Title; and Oh! that we knew him, according to it, understood what this means, *the holy One of Israel*. He was a holy Man, and knew something, yet confesses his own Ignorance in that Point: There must be some Knowledge of it, to discover Ignorance of it, *Prov. xxx. 3.* *I neither learned Wisdom, nor have the Knowledge of the Holy.*

In Returning and Rest, &c.] In leaving off the Pains ye take in Messages and Journies to *Egypt*, in humbly and quietly composing yourself to wait on me, and trust on me; submitting to my Hand, in what I bring upon you, and from the same Hand, mine alone, expecting Deliverance in due Time.

This

This does not bar the Use of all lawful Means, but as it shuts out perplexing Cares and Turmoil, even in those good Means, so it expressly forbids all intermeddling with all unwarranted Ways, such as God doth not direct us to, but rather dissuade us from.

And if this be the safest Way, sure it is the sweetest easiest Way: there cannot be any thing easier than to be quiet and sit still, to rest and trust, and to be safe and strong; and as it is in this particular, so generally it is in all the Ways of God; they are the only easy, peaceable, sweet Ways, the least Pains and surest Advantage. And the Ways of Disobedience, besides what comes after, are, even for present, more turbulent, laborious perplexed Ways. What a Hurry and Pother are Men put in, to serve their Lusts, or their Ambition; which if they attain, does not quit the Cost and the Pains: Besides that, often their Hopes mock them; and after long Pursuit, they embrace a Shadow. Thus Men woo their own Vexation, and take a great deal of more Pains to be miserable, than they should be put to, to make them happy. What a Pity, to pay so dear for nothing, to give their Riches and Treasures, and to be at Pains too, to carry them to a People that shall not profit them, * both their Expence and Travel laid out to no Purpose? The voluptuous, or covetous, or ambitious, how do they project and drudge, and serve their wretched Lusts, that when they have done one piece of Service, are still to begin another? And what is the Profit of all, Shame and Sorrow at last? The humble sober minded Christian saves all that Pains, and hath his Heart's Desire in Quietness and Confidence †. His great Desire and Delight is God; by desiring and delighting he hath him, *Psal. xxxvii. 4. Delight thou in the Lord, and he shall give thee thy Heart's Desire, HIMSELF*; and then sure thou shalt have All: Any other thing *commit to him, and he shall bring it to pass* ‡.

2

Strange!

* *Et oleum & operam.*† *Vacat temperantia.* Sen.‡ *Sed, non habebunt requiem, qui bestiam adorant.*

Strange! Men might have God at an easier rate than the poorest Vanities they are hunting after, and yet they will not, a full Fountain of living Waters ready provided, yet will be at Pains to hew out scurvy Cisterns, that, after all their Pains, are but *broken Cisterns, and can hold no Water.*

I know not what Men are doing, still at work, and might better sit still, troubling themselves, and all about them, and cannot well tell for what. Oh! the sweet peace of believing and obeying God; they truly conquer sitting still*, in all Times they are safe under the Shadow of the Almighty, and *strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.*

And ye would not, but said, No] Thus Men sometimes flatly reject his Counsels; and when they are not so gross as plainly to speak it out, yet say so, in doing so, and for good Manners sake will blanch it with reproaching the Messengers, will not have it to be God's Mind, but Men's own Fancy, a false Vision, will own nothing for Truth but what suits their Humour and Design. First, they resolve on their Course without acquainting God, ask not his Advice: Then, when he is pleased to give it by his Messengers they reject it, not under that Name, as *God's Advice*, but will not have it pass for this, because it crosses their already-determined Course; if it favoured that, then no Question, welcome enough, as his Word, that is meant by these Words, *Ver. 10.* And so they used *Jeremiah* long after, in this very Point, *Jer. xlii. 2.* And so they go on to take their own Course, *No, but we will flee upon Horses.*

And this is the Nature of carnal Hearts generally inclined to rebel, and take a Way of their own, casting the Counsels of God, as not suiting with the State, Wit, or Points of Honour: They find more Feeling and real Substance in sensual Things than in the Promises of God; these seem airy unsure things to them, therefore they would still see apparent Means, and where these fail, think it but a Fancy

to

* *Varro de Romanis consilio cuncta agentibus, Sedendo vincebant.*

to rest on God, dare not trust him so but as withal to do for themselves, although nothing can be done but what he forbids; which therefore cannot be done, without giving up with him, and departing from their Trust on him. All this cleaves to us, and much Cause have we to suspect ourselves, when 'tis but doubtful that there appears little or no Evidence of God's Counsel or Good will to a Business, but rather clear Characters of his Dislike. And much of our own Will, a stout uncontrollable Bent to it, conscious to ourselves of this, that either we have not asked Advice of God at all, or very slightly, not being much upon our Knees with it; or, possibly, in asking his Advice, have brought our Answer with us, in our own Breasts, the lying Oracle, that making Answer, and we consenting to delude ourselves, not hearkning to any thing that does not clink and sound to our Purpose.

Our Hearts are exceedingly deceitful, and particularly in this Point of withdrawing our Trust from God, and following him in his Ways, to trust on the Arm of Flesh, on Policy and Strength, and Self-resolved undertakings, rather than on him without these. Ill Men think those that advise them to trust on God, are silly Fellows, knows not what belongs to Policy and Reasons of State; a fancied Wisdom it is, that Men are enamoured with, and look not to a higher Wisdom, consider not God, that *he also is wise*, Isa. xxxi. 2. There is, I think, in that Word a tart Scorn of the Folly of their seeing Wisdom. Be it you are Wits, yet you will not deny some Wisdom to God; yet *he is also wise*. So think not on his Power neither; therefore he puts them in Mind that *the Egyptians are Men*, &c. Ver. 3.

Well, if you be resolved on that Course, says God, then know mine too, that I am resolved upon: Therefore *ye shall flee*, shall have fleeing enough; and if you be *swift*, they that pursue you shall be *swifter*, and one shall serve to chase a thousand, the Rebuke, the very Terror of one. This is the Con-

dition

dition of the mightiest People and best appointed Armies, when forsaken of God. There is no Strength nor Courage, nor any thing of Worth in any of the Creatures, but as it is derived from God; it is dependent on him in the Continuance and Use of it. Why are the valiant Men swept away? *Jer. xlv. 15. They stood not, because the Lord did drive them.* We have seen this, and the Turn of it on both sides, how Men become a Prey to any Party, when the Terror from God is upon them.

Therefore learn we to fear him, to beware of all Ways, wherein we may justly apprehend him to be against us, cleave to him and to his Truth, when it is lowest, and when no human Means of Help appear, then think you hear him saying to you, *stand still and see the Salvation of the Lord.*

Ver. 18. Therefore will the Lord wait, &c.] There is no Language of Men nor Angels fit to express the Graciousness of God's Punishments, and the Threatnings of them, as if it were violently drawn and forced from him; but Mercy, and the sweet Promises thereof, naturally flowing from him. Thus, here, he is forced to *give up his People to their own Counsels*, because they will not follow his Advices; and entreats but to be quiet, and let him do for them: But seeing they will not sit still, and be safe at his Discretion, they must run their own Course, and fall in it. But it cannot pass so, they must not be quite given over; the Lord hath an Interest in them that he will not loose. They must indeed for a Time eat the Fruit of their Ways, and that is not a Season to shew them Favour; but the Lord will wait a better Hour, he is resolved to shew them Mercy, and will find his own Time for it; therefore will he *wait, that he may be gracious.*

And this is he moved to, according to his gracious Nature, by the Greatness of their Distress and Desolation, though procured by themselves, their great, their inflexible Stubbornness; yet he pities to see them so left as *a Beacon on the Top of a Mountain, &c.*

There-

Therefore, &c. Thus we have the proper Arguings of free Mercy, which otherwise, to our narrow Thoughts may seem strange, and somewhat inconsequent: Such a *Therefore* as this so unexpectedly changing the Strain, doth genuinely and sweetly follow upon the Premises, when free Love is the Medium; that interveening in the midst, makes the sweet Turn, "Your Iniquities prevail to bring you low, and lengthen out your Calamities; therefore I will let that have its Course, and will stay till my fit Time come to do you Good. Mean while I will ly hid, and be as sitting still; but when that Time comes, I will get up and shew myself." He will be exalted, that he may have Mercy on you; for the Lord is a God of Judgment, he is wise, and just, and good, and knows his Measures of afflicting his People, his Times and Ways of delivering them, and bringing Destruction on his Enemies, and will not slip this Season; and it being so, this certainly follows, that they are *blessed that wait on him.*

Obser. 1. The strong Inclination of God to shew Mercy; He would willingly have his People to find nothing but ease; *delights* in the Prosperity of his Servants, would have them constantly have a sweet, peaceful, yea, chearful Life, by constant walking in his Ways: But they are often the Enemies of their own Peace, grieve his Spirit, and turning to be their Enemy. But he cannot persist in that to his own; he longs to be at his Way of Mercy and loving Kindness again; he *retains not his Anger for ever*, because Mercy pleases him; he inflicts Judgment for Sin, but that he delights in is Mercy: Therefore, says the Prophet, *Lam. iii. Though he cause grief, yet he will have Compassion, according to the Multitude of his Mercies: For he doth not willingly afflict, nor grieve the Children of Men.* Though he doth grieve them, yet not willingly; they themselves procure and draw on that, by grieving his Spirit, but he willingly shews Mercy, for that abounds. There is such Multitude

titude and plenty of it, that, as to full Breasts, it is a Pleasure to him to let it forth. The two Words, *gracious* and *merciful*, that stand first in the Name of God, *Exod. xxxiv. 6.* the one signifies *free Grace*, the other *tender Bowels of Mercy*. This is no Emboldment to continue in Sin, yea it is of all Things the most fit Encouragement and Inducement to a Sinner to return from his Sin; and so it is used and urged throughout the Scriptures, *Isa. xxxi. 5. 6.* and *lv. 7. Jer. iii. 12.* In publick Calamities, were a People charging the Cause thereof upon themselves, searching their Hearts and their Ways, and turning in to God, humbly acknowledging their Iniquity, and entreating Pardon. Oh! this is the Thing he would not despise; yea, 'tis that he looks and longs for, and upon that would readily forget all past Disloyalties, *Jer. iii. 1.* Yea, at the Sound of their Repentings his Bowels would resound with Compassion by a secret Sympathy and Harmony, as one String well tun'd to another, stirs when it is touched. Thus, *Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.*

This a Sinner shall find in his returning unto God, more than we can express or promise in his Name. Oh! *He waits to be gracious*, meets thee graciously, yea, hath first touch'd thine Heart secretly, first drawn it towards himself, before it stirr'd, or had a Thought that Way. Now, no more Upbraidings, or Remembrance of all thy Wanderings, an act of perfect Oblivion is past, *Jer. xxxi. 34.* Is thy Heart any little softned, and relents towards him? Then the Controversy is ended, and his Thoughts are now, how to comfort thee. Art thou busy indicting Accusations against thyself; then makes he it his Part, to wipe away and blot out. Comest thou home with an Heart full of holy Shame and Grief, and thy Mouth full of humble Confessions of thy Disobedience? Then know 'tis thy tender-hearted Father meets thee, most ready to forgive thee; yea, to interrupt thy Confessions in the middle with Embraces and Kisses of Love.

But, alas! we prejudge ourselves of the sweet Experiences of these tender Mercies, by the Hardness of our Hearts, and by the Lightness and Vanity of them. Oh that Indignity! Our God still *waiting to be gracious*, to heap up more of his Love to us; but we are busied in other Things, and not at leisure to wait on him. Oh! what are they? These Things that take us up; great Matters! Alas! sorry Trifles, all Day long, and when we are at Leisure, yet are not at Leisure; for then we must take our Ease, must go to sleep; and so still he is put off and forced to retire, after he stay'd till *his Head be filled with Dew, and his Locks with the Drops of the Night*.

Obfer. 2. The Lord doth most exactly and wisely measure both the Degree and the Time of his People's Afflictions, though they have brought them upon themselves; and justly he might leave them so. This he will not do, he is a God of Judgment. This is largely and sweetly exprest, in a Resemblance of Husbandry, *Isa.* xxviii. 24. *ad ult.* He knows how much and how long outward or inward Trouble is fit for every one; and where the less will serve, will not use the more; knows what Need some spirits have to be bruised and broken beyond others, either under Disgrace or Poverty, or the proper Pressures of the Spirit within, Apprehensions of Wrath, or Withdrawments, at least, of Comforts, and hath set his Days for deliverance of his Church, and of every Believer under Affliction; so the stile of the Prophet, *In that Day*, speaking as of a certain prefix'd Day, and that no Power or Wit of Man can disappoint: And it is so chosen, as it shall be evident to be the fittest, that it could not so well either have been sooner or later; all Things concurring to make it most seasonable to his People, and honourable to his own Name. *The Vision for the appointed Time*, *Hab.* ii. 3. *though it tarry, wait for it, it shall come, and shall not tarry.* That is strange, *though it tarry it shall not tarry.* But in the Original there

there are two Words, the one importing an undue Slowness, or constrained Retardment, that cannot be so, *it shall not tarry. Though it tarry*, that is, though it stay itself, and come not till the *appointed Time*: So the other Word signifies; thus, *Psal. cii. 13. He will arise and have Mercy upon Zion; for the set Time is come.* Now, for this the Lord waits: 'Tis not Want of Love, but Abundance of Wisdom, that he delivers not sooner, hath chosen the fittest Time, in his all-discerning Wisdom; yet there is in his Love an earnest kind of longing that the Time were come. Thus here, *he waits to be gracious*, and will be exalted, will chearfully and gladly raise up himself, and appear to shew Mercy to his People, and bring his Enemies low; coming forth, as it were, to Judgment, and sitting down on his Throne, in which Posture he was not seen while they prevailed and triumphed, and his Church was under their Oppression; but when the Time of their Restoring and Consolation comes, he then is to sit on his Throne, and so is exalted to shew them Mercy. Hence the Psalmist so often desires, that the Lord would arise, *Psal. lxxvi. 10. xiv, 22.* and utters Predictions, assuring that he will arise; and exciting his People to rejoice in that, *Psal. ix. 7. 8. and Psal. xcvi. xcvii. and xcviii.*

Thus the Church in her saddest Condition ought hopefully to remember and rest on it, that the Day is determined, and cannot fail. Our Salvation is in God; he laughs at his Enemies, when they are in the Top of Prosperity and Pride, sees that their Day is coming. Now, certainly the firm Persuasion of this would much stay our Minds; but either we do not believe, or do not improve, and use these Truths, and draw that Comfort from them, that abounds in them. Our God loses no Time; *he is waiting, till his appointed Time*; and if *he wait*, it becomes us so to do: That is our Duty here, *to wait on him*; this Faith does, and so makes not Haste, neither goes out to any undue Means, nor frets impatiently with-

in, at the deferring of Deliverance, but quietly rests on God, and waits for him. This, as it is our Duty, so our Happiness, and so it is here exprest. Upon Consideration, that *the Lord waits to be gracious*, and will be exalted to shew Mercy, the Prophet is carried to this Acclamation, to the Happiness of Believers;

O! blessed they that wait for him!

Their Thoughts fall in, and meet with his. For he is *waiting* for the same Day they *wait* for, and if he be not disappointed, they shall not. We are naturally irregular in our Affections and Notions; and the only ordering of them, is by reducing them to a Conformity with the Ways and Thoughts of God, that keep an unalterable fixed Course, as the Heavens: The Way, I say, to rectify our Thoughts is, to set them by his, as Clocks and Watches, that so readily go wrong, too slow or too fast, are ordered by the Sun, that keeps its Course. Oh! that we were more careful to set and keep our Hearts in Attendance on God, winding them up in Meditation of him and conforming them in their Motions and Desires to his Dispose in all, for all that concerns us, and for the Times of all, being quiet, yea, glad in this, that the Psalmist makes his Joy, *My Times are in thy Hands, O Lord*, and sure that is the best. Were I to chuse, they should be in no other Hands, neither mine own, nor any others. Alas! what silly poor Creatures are we? How little do we know what is fit for us in any Kind? and less what Time is fit for any Mercy to be bestowed upon us. When he with-holds Mercies or Comforts for a Season, it is but the due Season; it is but to ripen them for us, which we in childish Haste would pluck green, when they would neither be so sweet nor so wholesome. Therefore it is our Wisdom and our Peace to resign all Things into his Hands, to have no Will nor Desires, but only of this, that we may still *wait for him*: All

shall

shall be well enough, if we be but rid of the vain Hopes and Expectations of this World: None who indulge them are so well, but they are still waiting for somewhat further. Now, amidst all that, our Soul may say with *David*, and speak it to God, as known to him, that it is so indeed: *And now, Lord, what wait I for? My Hope is in thee: My Expectation, or Waiting, the same Word that is here, is all placed upon thee.* Is it so, Brethren? Are our Hearts gathered in from other Things, to this Attendance, while the most about us are gaping for the Wind? Have we laid all up in God, to desire and *wait for him*, and pretend to nothing beside him?

I would do so, may a Soul think; but can I hope that he will look on me, and bestow himself on such a one as I am? To that I say nothing, but look on his Word: If thou thinkest that Warrant good enough, here 'tis for thee, that they are certainly *blessed that wait for him.* This is Assurance enough. Never was any that *waited for him* miserable with Disappointment. Whosoever thou art that dost indeed desire him, and desirest to *wait for him*, sure thou resolvest to do it in his Ways, wherein he is to be found, and wilt not willingly depart from these; that were foolishly to prejudge thyself, and not to be true to thy own End. Therefore look to that, do not keep Company with any Sin; it may surprize thee sometimes as an Enemy, but let it not lodge with thee as a Friend.

And mind this other Thing, prescribe nothing to God: If thou hast begun to *wait*, faint not, give not up, *wait on still*: 'Twere good Reason, were it but upon little Hope, at length to find him; but since it is upon unfailing Assurance, that in End thou shalt obtain, what Folly were it, to lose all, for want of waiting a little longer? See *Psal. xl. 1. In waiting I waited, waited and better waited*, but all was overpaid; he did hear me: So *Psal. cxxx. I wait and wait, untill the Morning*: These two joined are all, and

may we'll go together *earnest Desire*, and *patient Attendance*.

These Words, as others of the Prophet, we call *Consolations*, I conceive, look beyond the Deliverances from outward Troubles, to the great Promise of the *Messias*: Sure I am the strain of something following is too high for that, and cannot but have an Aspect to the Days of the Gospel, as that, *Ver. 26*. Now, the Lord *hath* set his Time, that *Fulness of Time* for the Coming of the blessed Son in the Flesh, and till that Time *came*, the Lord was *waiting to be gracious*, to open up his Treasures more fully than ever before; which when he did, then was he exalted to shew Mercy, and exalted in shewing Mercy. Christ himself was lifted up on the Cross there to shew that rich Mercy that is for ever to be admired; lifted up, to shew his Bowels, as the Word is here, Did he not let us see into his Heart there to read that Love that can no otherwise be uttered? And in that the Lord was most eminently manifested a God of Judgment, Wisdom, and Justice, and Mercy, all shining brightest in that Contrivement. There he was lift up, and then after that lift up into Glory, that is the *Desire of the Nations*, the Salvation and Joy of all Ages, both before and after. Before he came, they were from one Age to another *waiting*, and more particularly at the Time of his Coming; God stirring up the Expectation of Believers to welcome him, being so near, *Luke. i. 25, 38*. And in all Times, before and after that is the Happiness of Souls, and they only are blessed that wait for him. Whether you do, or do not believe it now, the Day is coming, when all the World shall know it to be so.

S E R M O N V I I I .

J E R E M I A H X I V . 7 , 8 , 9 .

O Lord, though our Iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy Name's sake; for our Backslidings are many, we have sinned against thee.

O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of Trouble, why shouldest thou be as a Stranger in the Land, and as a Way-faring Man, that turneth aside to tarry for a Night?

Why shouldest thou be as a Man astonied, as a mighty Man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord, art in the Midst of us, and we are called by thy Name, leave us not.

IF we look backwards and forwards in this Chapter, we find the three great Executioners of God's Anger on the World foretold, as having received Commission against this People.

In all Troubles felt or feared, this is still the great Recourse of them that are acquainted with it, and can use it, PRAYER. And their Labour in it is not altogether lost, even where the Judgment is determined and unalterable, as here it was; for some Mitigations of Time and Measure are desirable, and by Prayer attainable: And whatsoever there is of that Kind, the Prayers that have been made long before, have had a Concurrence and Influence in it, and always at the least, Prayer carries the personal Good of them that present it; if it return unto their Bosom, as *David* speaks without Effect for others, it returns not thither empty, brings Peace and Safety thither with it, they save their own Souls. The Mourners, if they turn not away the Destroyers Weapons from the City, yet they procure one sent along with an Ink-

horn with their own marking and sparing. And were there nothing in this, nor any following Effect, Prayer hath within itself its own Reward: Did we know it, we would think so. The very Dignity and Delight of so near Access to God, to speak with him so freely, this in itself is the most blessed and honourable Privilege that the Creature is capable of; it is a Pledge of Heaven, something of it before-hand, a standing in Pretension to the Life of Angels*, (to be but a little lower, as the Word is, *Psal. viii.*) Many practise a Form, few know the vital Sweetness of it.

Oh! my Brethren, be aspiring to more Heavenliness, and an higher Bent of the Soul in it, than yet you know, and use it more that Way, use it for yourselves and others, this whole Land, these Kingdoms, the Church of God through the whole Earth. No Times that we have seen wherein it hath been more needful, and none wherein less plentiful; none that *stirs up himself to lay hold on God*. Some, no doubt there are in these Times; yet so few, so general a Decay and Negligence in the Zeal and Frequency of Prayer, that to speak of there is none. And is it not so now with us? Many discourse one to another, and yet most to little or no purpose; but little is spoken where nothing would be lost, in humble Supplication to God: And this is the saddest Sign of that long lasting Trouble. Oh! pity the Kingdom and yourselves, and learn to pray.

This Prayer of the Prophet is made up of the two usual Ingredients, *Confession* and *Petition*.

O Lord Jehovah.] A chief Point of Prayer is the presenting of the Soul before God, remembering to whom we speak, that it is to the great King, the holy God, which this expresses, where it is indeed, when we say, O LORD, or should remind us of, when we forget it, to have such Apprehensions as we can reach, of his glorious Majesty. Consider, if we find our Hearts filled with him, when we are before him. Oh! how seldom think we that he is God, even while we speak to him, and how quickly do we forget

it, and let slip that Thought, when we have any thing of it, how soon are we out of it, and multiplying vain Words; for so are all these we utter to him without this. Oh! pray to be taught this Point of Prayer, and watch over your Hearts in Prayer, to set them thus, when you enter to him, and to call them in when they wander, and pluck them up when they slumber, to think where they are, and what they are doing.

Our Iniquities testify against us.] Confession fitly begins. All the Difference betwixt God and us lies in this, *our Iniquities*. Now humble Confession is one great Article of Pacification, it is a Thing Judgment certainly aims at, *Hos. v. 15.* a Thing Mercy is mainly moved with, *Psal. xxxii. 5. Jer. xxxi. 18.*

When we are to encounter any Enemy or Difficulty, it is Sin weakens us: Now, Confession weakens it, takes away the Power of Accusations, anticipates the great Accuser, leaves him nothing to say, takes off the Stroke of Sins, testifying against us, says, “You need not, I confess all, and more than you can say.”

For this, a right Knowledge of God's Law is requisite, and then a diligent Use of it; laying it to our Ways, as a straight Rule to shew our Unevenness, which without it we discern not: Set that Glass before you; but withal, beg Light from Heaven to see by, otherwise our Applications to this Work of *searching our Hearts*, and comparing them with the Law, is but poring in the Dark, where nothing is to be seen of our Spots, though we set the Glass before us, and open the Leaves of it. *The Spirit of a Man is the Candle of the Lord*; but it is so when he lights it, and directs a Man by it in to himself, to see the secret Corners and Pollutions that ly hid within him: Sin discovered by this Light, appears in its native Likeness, and that makes lively Resentments and Confessions.

Their Confession of Sin varied here in three several Expressions, none of them empty; the adding one to another, testifying a deep Sense, and each of them having

having much under it, when issuing from an awakened sensible Mind.

Our Iniquities testify against us. This expresses a deep and clear Convincement. Our Iniquities are undeniable; they stand up, and give in Witness against us, and we cannot except against them, nor deny the Charge they lay.

And thus it shall be with all Transgressors in their Day, and each of us. 'Tis not far off, our particular Day, 'tis coming, when the most ignorant shall be forced to know, and the most obstinate and impudent shall be forced to acknowledge their Iniquities. Such as now will not be warned and convinced, that hide their Sin as Men, as *Adam*, that shew themselves in that his Children, they (as he) shall be called for, and and forced to come out of the Thickets, and convicted of their Disobedience. This Men find sometimes in a Day of Distress, when some outward or inward Pressure seizes on them, lays on the Arrest, and brings them to stand and hear what these Witnesses have to say against them. However, there is a Day coming for this at the long-run, a Day of particular Judgment for each one, and that great solemn Day for all together; the Light of that fiery Day shall let them see to read the Bill they would not look on sooner.

If Men would consider this, when Sin is speaking them fair, and enticing them, in how different a Stile it will afterwards speak, it would spoil the Charm of it, as *Solomon* speaks of the *strange Woman*, *Prov. v. 34.* So are all the Ways of Sin, those same Sins that look'd so pleasing and friendly, and entreated thee, shall appear again in another Tune, and with other Language, to witness against thee, and cry for Vengeance. Men think Sin evanishes as it is acted, and forget it as if they were to hear no more of it, and know not that it shall be all forth-coming again, even Thoughts, Words and Actions; All is kept for a Court-day; *Iniquities seal'd up in a Bag*, as *Job* speaks, as Writs to be produced in the Process against thee. Oh! how little know you, what the Amazement is;
of

of a Man's Sins surrounding him, and testifying against him, that he is a Rebel against God, and to be condemned; and no Scarcity, such Multitudes of them, one Company succeeding another, as that Word, *Job x. Thou renewest thy Witnesses against me*, not by twos or threes, but thousands, Armies of them. This is more affrightful than to be encompass'd with drawn Swords, or to see a whole Army march up upon a Man, it were nothing to these Bands mustered up, *Psal. l. 21.*

There is no way to escape but by Prevention, taking a Day before-hand to judge thyself, and call these Witnesses, and hear them, and pass Sentence; this would save the Labour. God is desirous to have the Matter thus anticipated, and turns it over to thee, to judge thyself, that he may not judge. Why defer we? Is it not worth the while and the Pains? And then for that Day, when it would seem so terrible to have these Witnesses stand up, thy Safety is, having judged and condemned thyself, to take Sanctuary in Christ, and make him thy Advocate, to answer all for thee: He can and will do it to the full; yea, he hath already answered all that thy Sins, were they many more, can say. O! happy the Man that takes this Course. Sin not upon this Account; none sure will do that. *These Things I write unto you, that ye sin not:* But then if any Man not so minded do sin, here is that Comfort, *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

Our Backslidings are many.] This the double Dye of his People's Sins, they are not simple Transgressions, but Treacheries, Revolts, Breaches of Promises, of Covenant and Vow, Turnings back, Going out from God, Adultery, prostituting their Hearts to Idols, to base Lusts; a Heart professed to be married to its Maker, running a gadding after strange Vanities. And who of us hath not this sadly to say against ourselves? "How often have I vowed myself
" thine, and with some kind of Hopes and Purpose
" to have been true to it; but how soon hath all eva-

" nished?"

“nished?” Oh! the unspeakable Unfaithfulness, not only of common formal Professors, but of real Believers. And these provoke God highly, go most to his Heart, to be slighted by his own, to whom he hath so particularly shewn himself, and imparted of his Love.

And we have sinned against thee.] This that comes last seems to sound least; but I take it as meaning most, as if they would have offered at particular Confession; and then seeing such a huge Multitude, and no End, were forced to retire, and shut up all in this general Word, “We might and would speak of many Things, but they are too many, we are overwhelmed; what shall we say, *We have sinned against thee.*” Thus Job, *I have sinned against thee, what shall I do unto thee.* As in David’s Confession, *Psal. li. THEE*, the great, the holy God, our God. This were our Business, instead of much Discourse and Debate of Things, to fall down and confess unto God. Begin at ourselves, our own Breaches and Backslidings, and then add the publick national Guiltiness. Oh! we are a sinful People, and few to lay it to Heart: All Ranks are highly guilty; and where are they that retire and mourn for their Abominations? those, continued and multiplied, are the Continuers and Multipliers of our Plagues, Sword and Pestilence, and Threatnings of Famine. If you have a Mind to do any thing for the Land, and for yourselves, your Families and little ones, Oh! apply to this Work, to confess and bewail your Iniquities, it may be, yea, I dare say, it shall be, *the Lord will return, and have Mercy on us.*

O Lord, though our Iniquities testify against us.] In all our Approaches unto God, it is a prime Thing to take him up according to his Name: This is the very Ground of the Access and Confidence of Sinners, and there is no coming near him without it. We have heard it, that *he is the Lord merciful and gracious, &c.* Not so much as Confessions can be made without this, much less Petitions presented; instead of coming to fall

fall down before him, to acknowledge Sin, the Soul would run quite away, and though that were in vain, would seek to hide itself, that it might not at all appear. But apprehending his Goodness and Readiness to forgive, this draws the Heart to him; and being drawn in, this makes it melt before him. In this some Christians mistake much, when they hold off from the Apprehensions of God's Graciousness, to the end that they may be the more humble and deeply affected with their Sins: No, no; this is that which warms, and softens, and makes the Soul pliable, fit to receive any Form from his Hand: Therefore the People of God, and the Prophets in their Name, still lay hold on that, and interweave it both with their Confessions and Petitions, as the main Ground of their Confidence in presenting both.

The Petition is in these two Words, that begin and close, *Do for us; Leave us not.* The rest is Argument, backing and pressing the Petition with familiar and pathetical Expostulations; and in them the whole Strength of the Argument lies in a mutual Interest, *that they are his People, and he is their God.* But take the Words as they ly.

Do thou for thy Name's sake.] It is not exprest *what* or *how*, and it is best so; that is referred to him that knows what is best, which we do not. It is in general an Act of Grace that is suited for; but, for Way and Time, all is put in his Hand. True it is, that sometimes Prayer is and must be somewhat more particular, upon particular Warrant, or upon Account of the common Liberty that God gives his Children, to present freely the particular Thoughts and Desires of their Hearts to him; but it is good always to close thus, or that it be understood so, when not exprest, that we resign that Matter to him, to make his own Choice of Things, and use his own Way: Only we entreat his Favour, and owning of us, and our Condition, that he *be for us, and do for us;* and this is safe and sweet, to let him chuse. We often perplex ourselves about that which lies not in our
Way,

Way, and is not our Part to be busied in, what Things shall be done. This he undertakes for, and will be careful of: Be not afraid, *Psal. xxxvii, 5. Commit thy Way*, roll thy Way upon the Lord, trust on the Lord, and he will do it; there is no more in the *Hebrew*, “ Turn it over to him, and be quiet, and “ let him alone, he will do well enough.” Besides, that is all Reason, if Men knew what Peace of Spirit there is in this Resignment, they would chuse it before any Way that can be thought on, and it never yet repented any that chose it.

For thy Name's sake.] This the unfailing Argument, that abides always the same, and hath always the same Force, when nothing is to be said for ourselves but Guiltiness; yet this Name we may plead by, *though our Iniquities testify against us*, as the *Hebrew Word* is: “ Though they return us harsh Answers, as from “ thee, speaking nothing but just Refuses of our Suits, “ and rejecting of ourselves; yet, Lord, remember “ thy own Name; and from thence we look for a “ better Answer: *Do*, according to that, and *for thy “ Name's sake*, in regard of Strangers and Enemies, “ that will reproach thy Name, in the Ruin of thy “ People, and *thy Name's sake*, in regard of thy “ Peoples Knowledge of it, and Confidence in it, “ that in all their Straits do expect their Help from “ thee, thy Promises made to them, and Covenant “ made with them: In these is *thy Name*, and they “ do cast themselves, and rely on it. Now see, whether it may be for thy Glory to cast them off: “ Whatsoever *we* are, look to thy own Interest, and “ *do for that; Do for thy Name's sake.*”

In the next Clause, and more particularly, a Part of his Name is exprest, *the Hope of Israel*; that is a Piece of his Royal Stile, by which he is known in the World: And in this appeareth the wonderful Condescendence and Bounty of God to his Creatures, to chuse a Number of Persons, that he will pass his Word to engage himself to be theirs: Not only to forgive us who are his Debtors by our Sins, but to

become

become himself a Debtor to us by his Promises; and he loves to be challenged on them, and press'd with them. 'Tis a Maxim of Court-Flattery, that mean Persons ought not to urge a King upon his Word; but this greatest King takes nothing better from the meanest of his Subjects. "Lord, thou hast undertaken the Protection of us thy People, and now it lies upon thee, in point of Honour and Truth, to save us."

The Hope of Israel.] All People, and every Man, have something they rely on and make their Hope, and they often chuse the most broken rotten Hopes, that fail while they lean upon them, and not only fail, but hurt them, as *Egypt* called to *Israel*: Therefore it proved as a *broken Reed*, that not only flew in pieces in their Hand, but the Splinter run up into their Hand and hurt them. How often have we found it thus, been disappointed, yea wounded by our vain Hopes. *pierced through with many Sorrows?* as the Apostle speaks of those that love and trust in Riches: Therefore *Job* disclaims this, that he never made Gold his God; *If I made Gold my Hope*, Chap. xxxi. 24. There is a Word of one of his Friends speaking, Chap. xxii. 25. *The Almighty shall be thy Defence*; the Word is, *The Almighty shall be thy Gold*. To them that account and make him so, he is both; for they are rich enough in him in the greatest Scarcity, and safe enough in him in the greatest Danger.

But you'd look to it: Enquire well what is thy Hope, what thy Heart readiest turns to, and cleaves to, to comfort itself in any Distress, yea in the Times of the greatest Ease: What are thy Thoughts most bias'd and turn'd to, with ofteneft and deepest Delight? Canst thou say, 'tis to God? that thy Heart hath got that Retreat, and is inured to that, is frequently there, throughout the Day, turns by, or passes over Husband or Wife, or Children, or Riches, or Delights, or any thing would stand in thy Way, and stays not, till it be at him, and there rejoices in his Love, sits down under his Shadow content and happy,
willing

willing that others should rule and share the World as they please, that thou dost not envy them, yea, canst even pity them, with all their gay Hopes and great Projects; yea, though thou do not find at all Times, yea, possibly scarce at any Time, that sensible Presence of God, and shining of his clear discovered Love upon thee, yet still he is thy Hope, thou art at a Point with all the World, hast given up all to wait on him, and hope for him, dost account thyself richer in thy simple Hope, than the richest Man on Earth is in his Possessions. Then art thou truly so, for the Hope of God is Heaven begun, and Heaven complete is the possessing of him.

The Saviour, not exempting from Trouble, but saving in time of Trouble. The Reason for Israel's Trouble lay in their own Sin and Security, and Abuse of Ease and Peace; but yet they were not left to perish in Trouble, but had a *Saviour in time of Trouble*, who was then most eyed and considered, and found to be so. In the Furnace, both the Faith of his People and the Truth of his Promises are tried.

The Children of God were much beholden to their Troubles, for clear Experiences of themselves and of God; and in this indeed is the Virtue of *Faith*, to apprehend God as a *Saviour in time of Trouble*, before he come forth and manifest himself to be so.

Wicked Men have their *Times of Trouble* too, even here, but have no Title to this *Saviour*. * If themselves, or Friends, or Means can help them, it is well; but they can go no further. But the Church, the *Israel of God*, when all Help fails on all Hands, have one great Recourse that cannot fail, the strong God, her *Hope and Saviour in time of Trouble*, or Straitness: When there is no Way out, he can cut out a Way through the Sea, can divide their Enemies, or whatsoever is there greatest Difficulty, and make a Way through the Middle of it. Well might he say, *Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O People saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy Help, &c.* Men are Under-Saviours in outward Deliverances, so it is

* *Sua fortuna fabri.*

said, *He raised them up Saviours*: But he is *THE SAVIOUR*. All others have Commissions from him. All their Strength, and all their Success is from him; without him, no Strength, nor Wit, nor Courage, avail: All falls to pieces when he withdraws his Hand. *Give us Help from Trouble; for* (says the Church) *vain is the Help of Man*. We have found this, if any People ever did, and have had real Lectures, to teach us to *cease from Man; for wherein is he to be accounted of?* Yet still we are ready to look to Multitudes, or to the Quality of Men that undertake: But if we do so, yet shall that prove our Shame and Disappointment; and it shall never go well with us, till our Dependence and Confidence come clear off from all Creatures, and we fix itself entirely upon him, who is *our Shield and our Strength*.

Thus should a Soul, in particular Distress, especially inward, wherein the Help lies most incommunicably and immediately in God's own Hand, learn to trust him; and though thou art not clear in thy Interest as a Believer, yet plead thy Interest as a Sinner, which thou art sure of. God in our Flesh hath enlarged the Nation of *Israel*: All that will but *look to him*, he is their Saviour; *Look unto me, and be saved, all the Ends of the Earth*. Now he hath stiled himself *the Saviour of Sinners*; press him by that, "Lord, I do look to thee, do for me, O Saviour; help, I am in Trouble." So, in any particular Temptation, either to Sin, or to Distrust because of Sin, "Now, Lord, here is an Opportunity for thy Power and thy Grace to glorify itself." And though thou find thyself sinking, yet believe, and thou shalt not drown.

Why shouldest thou be as a Stranger, &c.] The main Thing desired was his constant Abode with them. Some passing Deliverances he wrought; but that was not enough, came *as a Stranger, to stay a Night*, refresh'd them with a transient Visit, and away again. Thus we may say, He hath still done for us; when we were in desperate Straits he came and helped, but then we were left to such Counsels as bred us new

Troubles: He hath not so evidently yet taken up his Residence, though he hath built him an House amongst us, we trust with that Intention, to *dwell with us*. This we are to suit and entreat for. *Why art thou as one astonied?* looking on our Miseries as an amazed Stranger, as not concerned in our Affairs or Condition, and not caring what become of us, *as a Traveller*, but passing through, and having no further Interest nor Regard: or, *a mighty Man that cannot save*, as Sampson after his Hair was cut, &c. *A mighty Man that cannot save*, either as wearied or bound, or somewhat hindred, though strong enough.

“ Now, Lord, look not on, own our Sufferings,
 “ and bestir thyself: Make it appear that *thou*
 “ *faintest not, neither art weary*, nor that any thing
 “ can stand before thee and be thy Hindrance. Break
 “ through our Sins, the greatest Hindrance of all, let
 “ not those stop thy Way, nor bind thy Hands; for
 “ thou art in the Midst of us, though we see thee not
 “ so in thy Works as we desire, yet here we know
 “ thou art in thy special Good-will and Power, as
 “ as thou art in our Profession and Homage done to
 “ thee as our King amongst us; that testifies thy
 “ Presence. Thou canst not so hide thyself, but there
 “ are still some Characters of thy Presence, and *we*
 “ *are called by thy Name, thy People*. If we perish,
 “ thy Name being upon us, what becomes then of
 “ it? Therefore leave us not; though thou strike us,
 “ yet stay with us, and we shall live in Hope of
 “ Favour and Deliverance, if thou go not away, our
 “ Cries and Prayers, at least our Miseries, will
 “ move thee.”

These Things make up our Plea. We are a most unworthy People, yet called by his Name, in Covenant with him; so his Glory is interested. We must not let go this; and what Advantage so great, as to have our Interest wrapt up in his? His Glory and our Safety in one Bottom, to sink and swim together, then there is no Hazard. Therefore keep close to his Interest and his Covenant, and beg his staying with

us, and arising for us, and lay hold on him for this End: 'Tis a pleasant Violence: and were there many to use it towards him, our Deliverance were not far off.

S E R M O N IX.

LUKE XIII. 1—10.

There were present at that Season some that told him of the Galileans, whose Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices.

And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such Things?

I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Or those eighteen, upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

He spake also this Parable: A certain Man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought Fruit thereon, and found none.

Then said he unto the Dresser of his Vineyard, Behold, these three Years I come seeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, Why cumbereth it the Ground?

And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this Year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

And if it bear Fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

IT is no easy or common Thing, to give God's Ways a right Construction; for the most part, we either let them pass unobserved, or unframe our Observations, looking through these Principles

and Passions of our own, that give Things another Shape or Colour than what is truly theirs. This was here the Case. This sad Accident should have been observed by them that heard it, and might have been spoken of by them to very good Purpose; but our Saviour knew well what they meant by reporting the Story, and what Thoughts they had of it, and of themselves, and by his Answer, it would seem, all was not right with them.

The Fact related we have not any further Account of in sacred History, nor any thing that we can clearly and certainly call it in any human Writer; it is commonly conceived to have been done at *Jerusalem*, where *Pilate* abode, and his Power was exercised and done upon the Followers of that *Judas of Galilee*, spoken of *Acts* v. being such as denied it to be lawful to give Obedience to the *Roman Empire*, or to offer Sacrifice for the Interest and Good of it: When they, it is likely, were coming together to offer at *Jerusalem*, and to maintain and to spread their Opinion, *Pilate* comes upon them, and while they were at the Solemnity, makes a Sacrifice of them to that Authority they refused to sacrifice for; whether justly or no, we cannot determine, our Saviour does not: But if it was just, sure it was very tragical and severe, suitable to that Character *Philo* gives of his Disposition that acted it. The straining of Justice commonly breaks it; a little of the other Side is of the two, doubtless the safer Extreme.

However, this Stroke, and all others, as they come from the supreme Hand, are righteous, whatsoever be the Temper or Intent of the lower Actor, and whatsoever be the Nature of the Action, as from him, the sovereign Hand of God is in them, and chief in them, *No Evil in the City but the Lord does it*. And yet all Evils, as he doth them, both are good and well done. Actions, whether voluntary or casual, as these two here, yet do powerfully issue from the first Being and Worker; and, as from him, are both unalterably certain and unquestionably just. Thus they that here

report it, seem to have judged of this Passage, that it was a just Punishment of Sin, and our Saviour contests not about that, but rather seems to agree to them so far, and draws that Warning out of it; only corrects the Misconceit it seems they were in, in thrusting it too far off from themselves, and throwing it too heavy upon those that sacrificed.

Think ye that they were Sinners, &c.] Though it were an Error to think that all temporal Evils are intended of God, as Punishments of some particular Guiltiness, and so be taken as infallibly concluding against either Persons or Causes as evil; yet certainly the Hand of God upon ourselves or others is wisely to be considered, and it will very often be found a Punishment pointing to the Sin; and it is certainly an Argument of very great Stiffness and Pride of Heart, not to observe and acknowledge it, and a sure Pre-sage either of utter Ruin, or, at least, of a heavier Stroke. Any that is set against the Lord, and will not be humbled, whether by what he sees on others, or what he feels on himself, *Isa. xxvi. 11.* shall find he hath an Overmatch to deal with, that will either bow him or break him.

Think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem?] Our Saviour goes not to search into the Quarrel, and to condemn or justify either the one Party or the other; that was not for his Purpose, his Aim was to rectify the Mistake of those he spoke to, and to draw forth of their own Relation what was most proper for their Use. Much of our hearing and telling of News hath little of this in it; and with most Persons it doth not relish, to wind Things that Way. Some, even good Persons, do accustom themselves, and take too much Liberty, to an empty fruitless Way of Entertainment in this Kind; and, if we make any Remark, it commonly keeps abroad, comes not home to ourselves. Be it any Judgment, be the Persons great Sinners in a sinful Course, yet they are not always the greatest of all, because they suffer, and

others escape, as we readily think, and they here conclude concerning those *Galileans*.

God is to be adored and revered, who useth his own Freedom in this, does Injustice to none, yet chuses them on whom he will do exemplary Justice, and whom he will let pass, and gives not Account of this to any; some less wicked have been Ensamples to them that were much more wicked than they.

Do not flatter yourselves in the Conceit of Exemption from some Stroke which others in the same Way with you have fallen under, or even from some Courle which others have run and smarted in, and bear yourselves big upon the Name of *God's People*. But tremble before the Lord, and search your own Hearts, and let us think, though we may not be guilty of such publick scandalous Evils, as others fall into, and are punished for, yet how full are we of secret Malice, Pride and Lust, &c. and wonder at the Patience of God to ourselves, while Multitudes have been swept away round about us. Think you that they that have died by *Sword* or *Pestilence* of late, were greater Sinners than we that are behind? Oh no! *but except we repent, we shall all likewise perish*. Enow of these Arrows are still in God's Arsenal; and though he use not these to us, yet remember Death and Judgment and Eternity are before us, and they call for wise and speedy Consideration and Repentance.

Oh! you that go on in your Transgressions, after all that is come upon us, that were Drunkards and Swearers, &c. and are so yet, what think you, because the Heat of publick Judgments is abated, is there no more Fear? Have you made a *Covenant* with Hell and Death, and gained Quarter of them, that they will not seize on you? Oh! that will never hold, they will not, nor cannot keep to you. And if you hold on your Course, when the Day of Visitation shall come, how much heavier shall it be by all this Forbearance? You shall wish you had been cut off with the first. The Day is at hand, when it shall be easier for them than for you; only the Advantage is, that

there

there is an Exception yet founding in your Ears, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

I beseech you, my Brethren, enter into your own Hearts, and be not always out of yourselves, and so out of your Wits; consider the Lord's Way and your own, and wonder at his Goodness! Why am not I made an Example to others, as well as so many have been made Examples to me? Now, let me fall down at his Feet and beg of him, that as he hath not made me an Example of Justice all this while, he may now make me an Example of Mercy and free Grace to all that shall look on me.

Our Saviour, to their reported Instance, adds another himself, that was no doubt late and recent with them to the same Purpose, and in the same Strain, *Think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Not just after the same particular Manner, but the *Likeness* is in *perishing*; "You shall as certainly perish as they are perish'd:" And this to many impenitent Sinners is verified in their cutting off, even by some temporal Judgment, after long abused Forbearance; and often very like those they have seen Instances of, and would not be warned by; thus, to many of the *Jews*, in the Death of many thousands of them, and the Destruction of their City by the *Romans*, in which there was much Likeness with the two explanatory Judgments here mentioned. But the universal and far more dismal *perishing* of unrepenting Sinners is, that Death that lies unseen on the other Side of that Death we see, and are so afraid to look on. Oh! saw we the other, this would appear nothing, it would be the only Terrible of all Terribles indeed. And how terrible soever, it is the unfailing Attendant of Unrepentance; these God hath linked together, and no Creature can sever them, Continuance in Sin and *Perishing*, Repentance and Life. It is Faith indeed that lays hold on our Pardon and Life in Christ, and by that we are justified and saved: Yet so as this is still true; so that the other nowise crosses

it, that there is no Life without Repentance. And this wrongs not the Gospel at all, to preach and profess Repentance, yea, it is a prime Point of preaching the Gospel: And here we find the great Preacher of the Gospel, who is himself the great Substance and Subject of the Gospel, this is his Doctrine, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* There is no right preaching of the Gospel, but the Doctrine of Repentance must be in it; the drawing and turning of the Soul to God, from whom it is gone out by Sin: This the Gospel aims at; and there is no preaching of Repentance without the Gospel. The Law indeed discovers Sin, but that is not enough to work Repentance, for that there must be a Door of Hope opened to a Sinner, at which he may come in, hoping to be pardoned and accepted, upon returning and submitting; this the Gospel only does. And whensoever the Prophets preached Repentance, there was somewhat that always expressed or imported the Notion of the Gospel; God declaring himself reconcileable, ready to forgive and receive him.

Now, not speaking of the Nature of Repentance, which here were pertinent, I shall only desire you to seek to know the Nature of it, by feeling the Power of it within you *. Oh! happy they that do: Were the Sweetness of it known, we might persuade most by that; but that cannot be known, till we be persuaded and brought to Repentance. The Delight in those Tears, the Pleasure in crucifying Sin, even the most pleasant Sins; the Soul then in its right Motion, when turning towards God, finds itself moved sweetly; but it is thrown, and distorted, and disappointed in turning from him, and following sinful Lusts: But here, Necessity is the Argument, the highest Necessity; if it may be necessary for you *not to perish*, then is it necessary for you *to repent*. Had any of you an Ulcer, though painful, to be lanced, yet if told *it must be*, else you'd die; that makes a Man call for it,

* *Malo sentire compunctionem, quam scire ejus definitionem.*
Kempis.

it, and entreat it; Lord, what is the Madness of the Minds of Men! Do we believe that there is such a thing after all that is here, as *Perishing* and *Saving*, *eternal Death* and *eternal Life*, and can we think on any thing else, so as to forget these, to be slight and unresolved concerning them, and yet eat and please the Flesh, and seek to make other Things sure, and leave these to their Hazard? The God that made your Hearts persuade them; for who else can?

The Parable that follows, follows out the same Doctrine of Repentance, and that upon the Motive of *Patience* and *Forbearance*. Particulars would not be overstrained and squeezed for Morality; the main is God's Dispensation, and his Expectation in his Orchard the Church.

Our Saviour is much in this Way of teaching, calls in natural Things to serve spiritual Ends, and so all are fit to do, had we the Faculty to extract it. A spiritual Mind draws that which is symbolical with it out of all; Such may fruitfully walk in the Gardens and Orchards, and feed on the best, though they stir nothing. The Great Lord is himself the Planter of his Vineyard; his own Hand sets each Tree, and the Soil is fruitful; there is Sap and Moisture. This is to be understood of his visible Church and Ordinances; for the Planting here is that. Christians are much compared to Things living, growing and fruitful, to the Vine and Fig-tree; there is so high Engagement to be so, *Isa. v.* and real Christians are truly so.

And he sought Fruit thereon.] Good Reason had he so to do, having so planted it; those Trees that are left wild in the barren Wilderness, no Fruit is to be expected on them, at least no Garden Fruit, such as grows in the Garden of God. Some Natures have some Kinds of Fruits, and some sweeter than others, but they are but wild Figs. God's Delight is to *come into his Garden*, and there *eat his pleasant Fruits*. Natural Men may, after their Fashion, be temperate, and patient, and charitable; but to believe on God,
and

and love him above themselves, and from such Principles to do all they do, this is not to be expected.

Now all that are planted in the Church of God, are in Name such Trees as should have their Sap in them, (that is, Faith and Love) and bear answerable Fruits: They are called *Trees of Righteousness, the Planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified*, Isa. lxi. He himself knows who are indeed such, and knows that the rest can bear no such Fruit, yet in regard of outward Dispensations and their own Profession, he speaks after the Manner of Men; *he comes and seeks Fruit*. Men that think they may live in the Face of the Church, and make Use of his Ordinances, and yet be as excusably barren of all the Fruits of Holiness, as if they grew upon a common Heath, 'tis strange they should not conceive their own Folly, and know that God reckons otherwise, and according to the Ground he hath set them in, and Manuring he bestows on them, looks for some suitable Fruit.

But the most are thus, they consider not what they are, think it a kind of impertinent Importunity, to press them to Holiness, to Meekness, to bearing Wrongs, to heavenly Mindedness, to spiritual Activity, and Usefulness to others. Why, 'tis strange, what think ye, my Brethren, are we Christians, or, are we not? We have a Name, that we are active, and are dead; Congregations are filled with such; and when the Lord *comes and seeks Fruit*, in the greatest part he finds none. If Lies, Oaths, Cursings, &c. were the Fruits, enough of these; but Zeal for God, Love to our Brethren, Self-denial, Humility, if these be they, alas! where are they? So much Preaching, Sabbaths, Fasts, and Covenants; and where is Fruit, *the Fruits of the Spirit*? Gal. v. Oh! empty Leaves, and some promising Greenness, but the most belie the Hope they give. And we of this Land, who are engaged so high, what could have been done more? Though lying far North, yet have we much of the Gospel Sunshine, and are bound by our own Promise, and Covenant, and solemn Oath to God, to be more fruitful,

ful, yet this is still broke. Who that had seen our first Meltings into Tears, or fair Buds of stirring Zeal, could have imagined we would have been so barren?

Now, the Conference with the Vine-dresser about it, though that is much for the Fulness of the Parable, yet may imply God's imparting of his Thoughts, concerning his Church, to his faithful Ministers, such are included under that Name here; for he blames not him as neglective, but complains of the Barrenness of the Tree. In the cutting down may be some pointing at Church Censure; but, I conceive, it is rather to express God's Purpose concerning the barren Tree, than to give Order or Command about it. Doubtless, the Lord would have his Vine-dressers sensible of the Fruitlessness of his Trees, though it be not by any notable Neglect on their Part.

These three Years.] This expresses the great Patience of God, that spares so long, speaks not of *cutting down* at the very first. Thus, of long Time hath he waited on many of us, many more Years than to the strict Number here named; on how many of us a great Part of our Lifetime? Whence is it that we are not afraid of this Word, as it were, here sounding in our Ears, *cut it down, why troubles it the Ground?* takes up Room, and does no Good, yea hinders and prejudices others, as all ungodly fruitless Persons in the Church of God do.

The Vine-dresser entreats and obtains an Year more: This the faithful Labourers of God will not fail to do; to Preaching to his People, they will join much Prayer for them, that they may be made fruitful, and mean time may be spared, and not perish in their Unfruitfulness, will double their Endeavours in the Sense of that Danger, to all other Pains will add this, the watering them with Tears. *God is gracious, and easy to be entreated*, and forbears yet, and waits. Oh! it is not yet too late. Any of you that at length are stirred to any real Desires of Fruitfulness to him, I dare give you Warrant to be confident of his not only Forbearance upon such a Desire, but his favourable

Acceptance of it, as a good Sign, yea, as already a Beginning of Fruit. Indeed, in case of People's remaining barren after all, the End will be, to be *cut down*; and to every fruitless and godless Person amongst you, it is not long to that Day, it will be upon you ere you are aware. As *John* preached, *The Ax is laid unto the Root of the Trees; therefore every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit is hewn down and cast into the Fire, Matth. iii. 10.* God is taking his *Ax*, as it were, and fetching his Stroke at you, and you know not how soon it may light, and you be *cut down*, and cut off from all Hopes for ever, never to see a Day of Grace more, nor hear a Sermon more, cut down and cast into the Fire to burn; and that never to end. Oh! for some Soul to be rescued were it even now, Oh! To-day, To-day, if you will bear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.

Real Christians, though not altogether barren, (that is impossible) yet are not so plentifully fruitful, little of the Increases of God, such as he may be invited to his Garden for, such as the Vine-dressers may rejoice in, yea the Master himself. The Lord maketh a kind of Boast of us, as Men will do of Trees in their Gardens, that they have much Fruit, though possibly having a meaner Appearance and Shew than most of the rest. Oh! what a Joy and Glory were it to our God, to have unobserved obscure Christians abounding in sweet spiritual Fruits, loaden'd with Fruit, and hanging down the Head, stooping the lower, still the more humble for it, referring all to himself, living to him, doing all for him. But alas! we are empty Vines, bringing forth Fruit to ourselves, serving our own Wills and Humours, and barren to him: But for this End are we *planted in the House of God*, and ingrafted into the Son of God, that blessed living Root, to be fruitful to his Praise; it is his Credit, *Herein is your heavenly Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit, &c.*

Now for this are requisite, 1st, Much Prayer; for tho' here he speaks as an ordinary Master, yet it is his

his secret Influence does all, *From me is thy Fruit found*; and Prayer draws down that. 2dly, Much Faith in Christ, living to him, and drawing Sap from him; such as do all in his Strength, and are much in Application and Attraction, shall be found the most abundant in all choice and sweet Fruits; that *abide in him*, that is, in the very Actings of Faith are more in him than many others that are yet in him: But, alas! this is a Thing we speak much, and know little of.

S E R M O N X.

Preached before my Lord Commissioner and the Parliament, 14th November 1669.

JOHN XXI. 22.

—*What is that to thee? Follow thou me.*

OF all that ever lived on Earth, the most blessed was this Handful and small Company our Lord choosed for his constant Attendants, to see his divine Miracles, enjoy his sweetest Company, and to hear his divine Doctrine. What a holy Flame of Love must have burned in their Hearts, who were always so near the Sun of Righteousness. It was indeed a sad Hour, wherein that was eclipsed, and the Lord of Life lay dead in the Grave: And what a Deluge of Joy was in their Hearts when he rose again; and what a Transport was it when they saw him ascend, and a shining Cloud kissing his Feet, and parting him from them. In the Interval, as he had risen himself, so he is raising them from their Unbelief. St. Peter not content with a bare forsaking his Lord,

Lord, had also denied him; but he falls not a quarrelling, but speaks of Love to them, and blows up these sparkles of Love with this threefold Question. *St. Peter* answers fervently, but most modestly: Whereupon his Lord gives him a Service suitable to his Love, *Feed my Sheep*; for which none are qualified but they that love him. But when he grows bold to ask a Question, he gets a grave Check, and a holy Command, *What is that to thee? Follow thou me.* This was a transient Stumble in one who but lately recovered of a great Disease, did not walk firmly. But it is the common Tract of most, to wear out their Days with impertinent Enquiries. There is a natural Desire in Men to know the Things of others, and to neglect their own, and to be more concerned about Things to come than about Things present. And this is the great Subject of Conversation: Even the weakest Minds must discant upon all Things; as if the weakest Capacities could judge of the greatest Matters, by a strange levelling of Understandings, more absurd and irrational than that of Fortunes. Most Men are beside themselves, never at home, but always roving. It is true, a Man may live in Solitude to little Purpose, as *Domitian* catching Flies in his Closet. Many noisome Thoughts break in upon one when alone; so that when one converseth with himself it had need be said, *Vide ut fit cum bono viro.* A Man alone shall be in worse Company than are in all the World, if he bring not into him better Company than himself or all the World, which is the Fellowship of God, and the Holy Spirit. Yet the Matters of the Church seem to concern all, and so indeed they do; but every sober Man must say, all Truths are not alike clear, alike necessary, nor of alike Concernment to every one. Christians should keep within their Line. If it be the Will of our Great Master, that the Order that hath been so long in the Church continue it, or not, *What is that to thee?* It is certainly a great Error to let our Zeal run out from the excellent Things of Religion, to Matters which have little

little or no Connexion with them. A Man though he err, if he do it calmly and meekly, may be a better Man than he who is stormy and furiously orthodox. Our Business is to follow Jesus, and to trace his Life upon Earth, and to wait his Return in the Clouds. Had I a strong Voice, as it is the weakest alive, yea, could I lift it up as a Trumpet, I should sound a Retreat from our unnatural Contentions and irreligious Strivings for Religion. Oh! what are the Things we fight for, compared to the great Things of God. There must be a great Abatement of the Inwards of Religion, where it runs wholly to a Scurf. God forbid any think, that except all be according to our Mind, we must break the Bond of Peace. If we have no Kindness to our Brethren, yet let us have Pity on our Mother, and not tear her Bowels; and indeed, next to the Grave and silent Shades of Death, a Cottage in some Wilderness is to be wish'd for, to mourn for the Pride and Passion of Mankind. How do the profane Wretches take Advantage from our Breaches? But if there be such here, because of the Weakness, Folly and Passions of some Men, is it Folly to follow Jesus? Are some ridiculous, and for that will you turn Religion into Ridicule? If you do, it will at last turn a *Sardonick* Laughter. Because we contend for a little, is the whole an Invention? Will the Pillars be brangled, because of the Swarms of Flies that are about them?

There is an eternal Mind that made all Things, that stretched out the Heavens, and formed the Spirit of Man within him; let us tremble before him, and love the Lord Jesus. Our Souls have indelible Characters of their own Excellency in them, and deep Apprehensions of another State, wherein we shall receive according to what we have done upon Earth. Was not Jesus the Son of God declared to be such by his Miracles, but chiefly by his Resurrection from the Dead? Hath there not been received and transmitted to us through all Ages, many Martyrs following him through Racks and Fires, and their own
Blood,

Blood, to his Glory? And shall we throw off all these? Better be the poorest; weakest, and most distempered Person upon Earth, with the true Fear of God, than the greatest Wit and highest Mind in the World, if profane; or though not such, if void of any just or deep Sense of the Fear of God, *For a living Dog is better than a dead Lion.* Some religious Persons are perhaps weak Persons. yet in all Ages there has been greater Nobles, and more generous Souls truly religious, than ever were in the whole Tribe of Atheists and Libertines.

Let us therefore follow the holy Jesus. Our own Concernments concern us not, compared to this. *What is that to thee?* may be said of all Things besides this. All the World is one great Impertinency to him who contemplates God, and his Son Jesus. Great Things, Coaches, Furniture, or Houses, concern the outward Pomp or State of the World, but not the Necessities of Life; neither can they give Ease to him that is pinched with any one Trouble. He that hath twenty Houses, lies but in one at once; he that hath twenty Dishes on his Table, hath but one Belly to fill: So, *ad supervacua sudatur.* All are uncertain, sudden Storms fall on; and Riches fly away as a Bird to Heaven, and leave those who look after them sinking to Hell in Sorrow.

A Christian is solicitous about nothing; if he be raised higher, it is that he desires not; if he fall down again, he is where he was. A well fixed Mind, though the World should crack about him, shall be in Quiet: But when we come to be stretched on our Death-bed, Things will have another Visage; it will pull the Rich from his Treasure, strip the Great of his Robes and Glory, and snatch the amorous Gallant from his fair beloved Mistress, and from all we either have or grasp at. Only Sin will stick fast and follow us, these black Troops will clap fatal Arrests on us, and deliver us over to the Jaylor. Are these Contrivances, or the dark Dreams of Melancholy? All the Sublimities of Holiness may be arrived at, by
the

deep and profound Belief of these Things. Let us therefore ask, Have we walked thus and dressed our Souls by this Pattern? But this hath a nearer Aspect to Pastors, who should be Copies of the fair Original, and second Patterns, who follow nearer Christ; they should be imitating him in Humility, Meekness and Contempt of the World, and particularly in Affection to Souls, feeding the Flock of God. Should we spare Labour, when he spared not his own Blood? How precious must the Sheep be, who were bought at so high a Rate as was the Blood of God? Oh! for more of this Divine and Evangelick Heat, instead of our distempered Heat. This is the Substance of Religion, to imitate him whom we worship. Can there be a higher or nobler Design in the World than to be God-like, and like Jesus Christ? He became like us, that we might be the more like him. He took our Nature upon him, that he might transfuse his to us. His Life was a Tract of doing Good, and suffering Ill. He spent the Days in Preaching and Healing, and often the Nights in Prayers. He was holy, harmless and undefiled, and separate from Sinners. How then can Heirs of Wrath follow the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World. Humility, Meekness and Charity were the darling Virtues of Christ. He came to expiate and extirpate our Pride; and when that Majesty did so humble himself, shall a Worm swell? No Grace can be where the Mind is so swelled with this airy Tumour. He was meek, and reviled not again; nor did he vent his Anger, though he met with the greatest Injuries. The Rack of his Cross could make him confess no Anger against those who were draining him of his Life and Blood; all he did was to pray for them. Charity was so dear to him, that he recommended it as the Characteristic by which all might know his Disciples, if they loved one another. But alas! by this may all know we are not his Disciples, because we hate one another. But that we may imitate him in his Life, we must run the

Back-Trade, and begin with his Death, and must die with him. Love is a Death. He that loves is gone, and lost in God, and can esteem or take Pleasure in nothing besides him. When the bitter Cup of the Father's Wrath was presented to our Lord, one Drop of this Elixir of Love and Union to the Father's Will sweetned it so, that he drank it over without more complaining. This Death of Jesus mystically acted in us, must strike down all Things else, and he must become our All. Oh! that we would resolve to live to him that died, and to be only his, and humbly follow the crucified Jesus. All else will be quickly gone. How soon will the Shadows that now amuse us, and please our Eyes, fly away?

LETTERS

LETTERS

OF

Archbishop LEIGHTON,

Printed from the Originals.

N^o I.

Sir,

See there is no place, city nor country, valley nor mountain, free from that sentence so early past upon the earth for Man's cause, Thorns and briars shalt thou bring forth; but he that is well bod walks on the safelier till he comes where there are none: but seeing that is not here, we are to use the greater coolness and deliberation in our removes. If your present company be some way irksome, a greater solitude may prove more so, only if God both sensibly fits you for it, and points clearly out the way to it, follow him; otherwise my advice should be not to hasten too much, and particularly no hand so to hasten as to run in debt for it; for speak it on experience, he that sets up any where in debt, it will keep him possibly wrestling and at under many years; but if you let your incomes do their own business, *pian piano*, as they come to your hand, you will find it much easier to do, and sweeter when it is done: meanwhile I know you can digest

N n 2

all

all a little longer, as hitherto you have done. To your other point touching Baptism, freely my Thought is, it is a weak notion taken up on trust almost generally, to consider so much, or at all, the qualifications of the Parents. Either it is a benefit to Infants, or it is not. If none, why then administered at all; but if it be, then why should the poor Innocents be prejudged of it for the Parents' cause, if he profess but so much of a Christian as to offer his Child to that ordinance: for that it is the Parent's faith gives the Child a right to it, is neither clear from Scripture, nor any sound reason; yet it is that I heartily approve your thought, that you would make it, as it most fitly may be, an active inducement to the parents to know him and his doctrine, and live conform to it, unto whose name they desire their Children to be baptised. But in this, and the other business, and in all things, I am confident that good Hand, to which I knew you have given up yourself, will graciously guide you. . . . they miscarry that desire to h. . . . will be his, Oh let it still more entirely be so with you and your Resigned Friend

R. L.

'Tis well our great journey is going on, and will quickly set us where we would be. The business you write of is to you one signal step of it, mark'd out by that Sovereign Hand which, I doubt not, will lead you in it, and all along through what remains, to whom I know you are constantly. —

No II

N II.

Sir,

SOME days ago I received some lines from you, and they were very welcome; for I know no better news can come from any corner of the earth, than of a soul attempting to overcome the world and its own self, and in any degree prevailing and resolving still onwards; all the projects and conquests of the world are not to be named to it. Oh! what a weariness is it to live amongst Men, and find so few Men; and amongst Christians, and find so few Christians; so much talk and so little action; Religion turn'd almost to a tune and air of words: and amidst all our pretty discourses, pusillanimous and base, and so easily dragg'd into the mire, self and flesh, and pride and passion domineering while we speak of being in Christ, and cloath'd with him, and believe it because we speak it so often and so confidently. Well I know you are not willing to be thus gull'd, and having some glances of the beauty of Holiness, aim no lower than perfection, which in end we hope to attain; and in the mean while the smallest advances towards it are more worth than crowns and sceptres. I believe it you often think on these words of the blessed Champion *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 9—24, &c. There is a noble guest within us. Oh! let all our business be to entertain him honourably, and to live in celestial love within, that will make all things without be very contemptible in our eyes.—I should rove on did not I stop myself, it falling out well too for that, to be hard upon the post hours, ere I thought of writing. Therefore Good-night is all I add; for whatsoever hour it comes to your hand, I believe you are as sensible as I that it is still night, but the comfort is, it draws nigh towards that bright morning that shall make amends.

Your weary fellow Pilgrim

R. L.

N n 3

It

It may be Mr. Ogle does not think me in earnest when I desired him to spy out a Hermitage for me; but if one remote enough were offered, I know not how it might tempt me. Meanwhile 'tis well; but if you say any thing of this, then 'twill cost you withal the remembring my service to him and the rest. — If you write again, I pray you load not the back of your Letter with any more than this, To Mr. Robert Leighton at *Edinburgh*; for by that it will not fail to find me out, and that answers the end, and you see I give you example.

N^o III.

Sir,

THOUGH I desired you to forbear for a while the pains of sending me the Book you spoke of, I know it was your kindness press'd you to send it, and I thank you. I cannot say I have read it through, but divers passages of it I have; and tho' I approve the design of it and all such Writings so far as I understand, and what I understand not adventure not to judge of, but rather *impliciter* think the best of it, yet I must confess their lowest rules that are laid as the foundation of their structure I find of most use; and, could I duly follow them, either I should insensibly be raised to those greater sublimities they speak of, if the great Lover of souls saw any such thing good for me, or I should humbly and contentedly live without them, which possibly would do as well till the Day come of the fullest and purest intuitive Life, which I live in the hopes of as not far off. Mean while I think I have at a venture given up with the contemptible Desires and Designs of this present world, and must have either something beyond them all, or nothing at all; and though

though this *βρεβοῦσα ὕλη*, this base clod of earth I carry still depresses me, I am glad that even because it does so, I loath and despise it; and would say, *Major sum & ad majora genitus, quam ut mancipium sim vilis corpusculi*. I have sent you two little pieces of history, wherein it may be you will find small relish, but the hazard is small; and however I pray you do not send them back to me at all, for I have enow of that kind. The one is of a good Pen, and an acquaintance and friend of yours, *Paulus Nolanns*, and his life of *Martin of Towers* I think you will relish, and I believe is not in your *Vitæ patrum*: The other *Valerius Maximus* I conceived would cloy you the less, because it is of so much variety of selected examples, and the stages are so short you may begin and leave off where you will, without wearying. But when all is done there is one only blessed story wherein our souls must dwell and take up their rest; for amongst all the rest we shall not read, *Venite ad me omnes lassæ & laborantes, & ego vobis requiem prestabo*; and never any yet that tried him, but found him as good as his word: To whose sweet embraces I recommend you, and desire to meet you there. *Yours*

R. L.

October 24.

1659.

N^o IV.

Sir,

THE Answer I intended your letter was a visit, and that not *en passant*, though I spoke, and once had thoughts of *Newcastle* for some days, my last purpose was no further than *Ingram*, unless it had been with you to *Wittingham* to see your honest neighbour Mr. *Hume*; which, if you think on it when you meet, it may be you will tell him. Nor was this a meer thought, for I was on my way towards you as

N n 4

far

far as *Ginglekirk*, whence I returned back to my lodge, finding myself not well, by reason, I think, of not scarce having been on horseback twice these many months. I am yet in a little distemper; of which, though I apprehend no great Height nor long continuance, yet I am doubtful whither I shall against this vacance attempt any further than *Pentland hills*: But it is no matter; blest be He in whom souls may meet and concenter in constant rest, and in renewed thoughts and desires intervise every day, in despite of these lumps of Earth. And in much greater matters how little imports the defeat of our purposes as to any thing without us, if it please him to shine on and advance our great business within. Oh! what's all the world to it, to that bright purity we aspire to, and the blessed eternity we hope for. And how great reason have we to say, *non magna relinquo, magna sequor*. I thank you for the notice of your Capuchin; but I almost knew that he was not here before I lookt. It is true the variety of his book refreshes us, and by the happy wording, the same things not only please, but sometimes profit us; but they tell us no new thing, except it may be some such thing as, I confess, I understand not, of essential unions and sleeps of the soul; which, because I understand them not, would rather disorder and hinder than advance me; and therefore I begin to be unwilling to look over these and such like, unless I could pick here and there such things as I am capable of, and not meet with those steep ascents which I dare not venture on: But dear *a-Kempis* is a way to it, and Oh! that I could daily study more and attain more sublime humble devotion there drawn to the life . .

. . . most soaring treatises I have yet met with, find any thing . . . certain and solid use that is there not plainly and Di . . .
proque est paucis opus & . . . *paucis libris ad bona me* . . . could we once thoroughly despise our own base flesh and the vain opinion of the world, and live in the divine will, as dead to all

all things beside, and gladly take the lowest room, he can if he please call for us to sit up higher. Oh! but the misery to have still lust, and pride, and self-will, and self-love, and desire of esteem amongst Men not only living, but, alas, lively and strong; and yet however it be, let us not faint in our minds, for in the name of the Lord we shall destroy them. And in the mean time blessed—ever blessed be his name, who hath called us to fight under his royal standard, and given us to resolve to live and die there. *Amen.*

Your fellow Soldier

R. L.

Nº V.

Dear Brother,

I writ to you lately, and troubled you with the story of my present and dayly growing unhealthfulness, which cannot add much, but something it does to my wonted longings for the evening, not without hopes that it shall likewise prove a bright and sweet morning. Mean while it is no great matter where I pass the few hours that remain, yet I told you I had some thoughts of spending them nearer you, but have not yet resolved; but that and all shall be disposed of as is best. Mr. *Aird* who gives you this, I believe, you have heard me speak of, as one acquainted with my free thoughts, and that hath himself a free unprejudiced soul, and loves truth and devotion wheresoever he finds it, even in the greatest croud of error or superstition about it. He hath a cell and a provision amongst the hills in the border of *England*, but is threatned with a removal upon the title of an old Incumbent who is at *London* or near it. If you be acquainted with Dr. *Cozens* Bishop of *Durham*, or can recommend him to him by any that is, if he himself desire

it, or in any other way can assist him, I intreat it of you. Mrs. *Abernethy* tells me her Son is in the King's Life-guards: if you meet with him, and by recommending him to my Lord *Gerard's* favour who commands it, or in any thing else can do him good, you shall oblige both me and the honest Widow. She makes often mention of you. *Cber Frere, Adieu*

March 5.

R. L.

For Sir *Ellis Leighton* }
at *St. James's*.

Nº VI.

Dear Friend,

I wish after your resolution taken, and I think *συνθεω*, you had barr'd the door on all suggestions from without and within that might have changed, or in the least disturb'd it. Sure I am the reason that convinc'd you is still the same, that what you may do you may also promise if it be requir'd; and I believe the design was so like to have made you serviceable to God and to souls, that he hath bought, that you should never have had just reason to repent it. The like I dare not say of your now recoiling; and if I might again prevail with you, I intreat you to re-advise the thing betwixt God and your own Heart, and that cleared as much as you can from all mists both of the fancy of others and your own melancholy. If you would meet me at *Culrofs* or *Lithgow* any time the next week, and send me word what day or hour you chuse, I would endeavour not to fail, or if coming to *Edinburgh* to speak with you (though at this time well I cannot) might be likely to do any help towards dispelling the cloud that hath overcast your mind, I would not grudge the pains. All I can do at this distance is to look up
to

to Him who alone powerfully can do it, and in his blest hand I leave it, and you, and myself, and all that concerns us and all the world; and whatsoever you do, never doubt the unalterable affection of

Your Friend,

R. L.

N^o VII.

Sir,

WHAT the opportunity is that may engage you where you are, seeing you express it not, I cannot particularly know: but whatsoever it is, I shall be glad if it suit your mind, and if I could do you any real furtherance in any such thing, I think and I need not tell you how ready the occasion would find me. Here I see nothing at present worth the thinking on for you, unless you have a mind to try a course of tilting for a Regency in Philosophy, as they call it, which is likely to be vacant here very shortly, Mr. *Wiseman* being upon the point of leaving it, and going to sleep. If you find a stomach to it, all I can promise is endeavour to see fair play; and if you make one, you would be sure to win, if it depended on the wishes of,

Sir,

your Friend and Servant.

N^o VIII.

Sir,

I Should please myself very much in doing any thing towards your repose; but there is nothing such as I wish within my reach, no, nor within my view. The Humanity-place will either not be vacant; or if it be, I think we shall break it for some reason.

reason. Of the other I writ to you, you only can judge whether it suits your genius and inclination; neither (if it did) have I power to promise any thing but hearty endeavours if I see it faisable, having no assurance of prevailing. But one thing I am sure of, and so are you, and it is enough, that to them that fear the Lord and trust in him, no good thing shall be wanting. The chusing of some dubious steps of our way may now and then be a little troublesome, but the comfort is, the journey will be quickly done, and then we hope to be where there are no desires nor deliberations of change of quarters. I am,
Yours.

I suppose you have heard of Mr. *Andrew Gray's* Death. He has got the start of us, but not for long. I am likely to preach To-morrow (God willing) in our own Hall, where for the present meets one of the Town Congregations.

Nº IX.

Sir,

I Think you know the reason of my forbearing to write; for you cannot but know that Letters sent by the Post are broke open very frequently, if not constantly of late; and other way I know none. I often entreated that favour of my *John* to inquire at your Sister's how you were, if she did hear, and if she knew any safe convey of Letters to you; but he did as he uses to do in diverse of the few little services I have for him, and I am beholden to his neglects. Mean while my not forgetting you, you may be assured of, while I shall continue to remember myself. When I think how little or nothing 'tis my Letters speak other than some short word dropt as it comes reflecting

reflecting to you some of your own thoughts, I am pained with your reckoning them any thing at all. Your imparting the particulars relating to yourself, though in extrinſick things, I do very heartily thank you for; for ſuch communications are a redoubling the pleaſure in them: and ſeeing our great Father's love deſcends to the ordering of the low concerns of our life, we were very unwiſe and ingrate not to obſerve them, and read the print of his bleſſed finger in them, who hath made Flies with ſo much art, and is truly *magnus in minimis*. Courage, it ſhall be well. We follow a conquering General; yea, who hath conquered already; *et qui ſemel vicit pro nobis, ſemper vincit in nobis*. For myſelf at preſent, I am (as we uſe to ſay) that is, this little contemptible lodge of mine, is not very well; but that will paſs ſome way or other, as it is beſt; and even while the indiſpoſition laſts, Oh! how much doth it heighten the ſweet reliſh of peace within, of which I cannot ſpeak highly (for to you I can ſpeak juſt as it is). But methinks I find a growing contempt of all this World, and conſequently ſome further degrees of that quiet which is only ſubject to diſturbance by our inordinate fancies and deſires, and receding from the bleſt center of our reſt: *for hurries of the World you know the way, Iſa. xxvi. 20.* and in theſe retiring rooms we may meet and be ſafe and quiet. That you ſpeak of the ſtroke ſeeming to threaten your Order I am not afraid of at all, neither for you nor myſelf, nor the generality of the reſt; but you may be aſſured, that in that caſe the lot of thoſe in my poſture will be the ſame with yours. *Sed Jehovah regnat, certentur Gentes & cum reliquis etiam inſulæ.* Farewell, Dear Brother,

Yours

N^o X.*Dear Friend,*

WHETHER you know the particular purport of the inclosed you sent me I know not; but it is to quit Ten Pounds *Sterling* supposed due to me from the party that pleads inability: and doubtless your recommendation, together with the charity of the thing (if it shall appear to be so) would easily give law to me for a greater sum than that. But the truth is, there is a main mistake in the business, for it is not payable to me, and therefore no way in my power, for my Lord *Bargeny* hath a lease of all my little dues in these parts for nineteen years, upon very easy terms as they inform me; yet whether he will consider that so as to make such an abatement of what is now his due and not mine, I cannot tell; neither have I any power to carve upon what is his without paying it back or some way compensing it to him myself; and yet even that I shall not decline, if, after you and I both know the more particular state of the business and the person, you shall judge it reasonable. This is all I can say to that at present; and I will not enter upon any other discourse by this; for the truth is, there is little to be said and much to be done. You and I are, I trust, upon a design that will reflect a very low estimate upon all below it, and it shall certainly succeed if we be careful to stick to our Leader, and follow him.

Pray for

March 1670.

Your poor Friend and Servant

R. L.

To the Rev. Mr. *Aird* }
Minister at *Tory*.

N^o XI.

N^o XI.*Dear Friend,*

I am very sorry for the indisposition you are under, but I assure you I do not value myself, nor any thing I can say or do either upon this or any other occasion, worth your pains of writing, far less of a journey hither; yet I should gladly enjoy your mistake in thinking otherwise, if I was in a posture capable of the pleasure others have of your abode under my roof for some longer time. The persons you mention in order to that affair, &c. I have not seen nor heard any thing from any of them since my last, nor expect that I shall till the beginning of *June* at *Edinburgh*, where I intend (God willing) to be, and desire, if it may be, to see you there. I have thoughts of going thither somewhat before that time, and therefore, if I did not signify so much to you, I fear you might miss me if you came hither.

As for the business it is very safe, with all our other Interests of Time and of Eternity in our Blessed Father's hand, of all Fathers the wisest and the best. He I am sure can mold either your heart or theirs you have to do withall, as he thinks fit, and it shall be as is best to be; therefore if we were together, I should not very eagerly dispute the matter with you, far less will I by scribbling. Let your hearts keep near to him, and be daily purging out all that may interpose and obstruct our closest union, and we have nothing else to care for. This moment is posting away, and that blessed day is hastning forward that shall compleat that union.

Pray for your lame Fellow-Traveller

R. L.

I should chide you, if I could do it sharply enough, for entertaining the least thought of any such jealousy as I think very incongruous with the strength and mutual confidence of solid Friendship.

Received at *Cannethan*, 14. May 1658.

I

N^o XII.

N^o XII.

Sir,

WAVING all other discourse till meeting, though you are possibly enamoured with your vacancy, yet if you find any return of appetite to employment in the Ministry, I am once again to offer you an invitation, for there is a place or two now vacant at my dispose. 'Tis true 'tis by the removal of the former Incumbents against their will; but you are not guilty of that by succeeding them, nor I by giving a call to any that will; for you may be sure they are not within the bounds I have charge of, but in other dioceses. There is one place indeed in my precinct now vacant, and yet undisposed of, by the voluntary remove of the young man that was in it to a better benefice, and this is likewise in my hand; but it is of so wretchedly mean provision, that I am ashamed to name it, little (I think) above five hundred merks by year. If the many instances of that kind you have read have made you in love with voluntary poverty, there you may have it; but where-soever you are or shall be for the little rest of your time, I hope you are, and still will be daily advancing in that blest poverty of spirit, that is the only true height and greatness of spirit in all the world intitling to a Crown, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Oh! what are the scraps that the great Ones of this world are scrambling for compared with that pretention. I pray you, as you find an opportunity, though possibly little or no inclination to it, yet bestow one line or two upon

Your poor Friend and Servant

Edinburgh, July 5.

1662.

R. L.

To Mr. James Aird.

N^o XIII.

N^o XIII.

Sir,

I Long to hear how you dispose of yourself if it be determined, if still in Suspense, I still wish you the favourable impression of that hand to which I know you have delivered up yourself, if you be resolved on a removal, and incline to the like charge here upon a fair call, I desire to know it, by the first opportunity, for I hear there is somewhat of that kind in the West likely to be at my Dispose; I would not have this unsettle your propension to stay where you are, if you find any thing within you, for thorns grow every where, and from all things below, and to a Soul transplanted out of itself into the root of Jesse, peace grows every where too, from him who is called our peace, and whom we still find the more to be so, the more entirely we live in him, being Dead to this World and self and all things beside him. Oh when shall it be, well let all the World go as it will, let this be our only pursuit and ambition, and to all other things *fiat Voluntas tua, Domine*, that both is painfull in some instance is the dubiousness.

N^o XIV.

Dear Friend,

BEING at present not well, I shall say no more but that I take these communications as a singular act of the truest kindness and friendship, and heartily thank you for them, and am glad to find that there are some souls in this world truly sick of it all, that being in my opinion a very happy symptom and prognostick of a prevailing health, such a degree of it at least as may be had in the diseased, defiled cottages wherein we dwell, and may be to us a certain pledge and real beginning of that full health

O o

we

we look for at our removeall, and therefore have so much reason to long and wish earnestly and sigh and groan for that day, and yet have no less reason to wait patiently for it. Pray for

Your poor Friend

31 March 1669.

R. L.

N^o XV.

Dear Friend,

I Was refreshed by the account of your feast in your former, of which I trust I was participant as to the blessing of it, for though absent I was heartily with you in desire. The accident your Letter acquaints me with I think concerns you little or nothing, for if there was any offence in the printing it, it rests upon him that procured it and the printer, but for instructing your own flock in what way you judge most accomodated to them, who can blame you; However, when I meet with the archbishop I shall (God willing) represent the business to him as it is, if I find it needfull, but if you think it hath come to his knowledge, and that with some misreport and disguise, I believe it might not be amiss for you to give him the true and ingenuous account of it yourself by a letter, for it may be some weeks may pass before I see him. But oh! how quickly will all those things be gone, and even at present a look beyond them makes them disappear. Let us manage our ways as prudently and profitable to our main end as we can, and let the World descant as they will. Blest are the upright in heart, for their great judge and master sees into the heart and cannot mistake them. Pray for

Your poor Friend

R. L.

N^o XVI.

No. XVI.

Dear Friend,

I Do very much commend the activeness of your charity in the journey you have taken, for the success though I had much desire and some little hopes of better, yet I suspected how it might prove, unless this one consideration, the extream necessity of this church at this time did prevail with our friend to do violence to himself. I hope you both pardon me for the very reason that I moved it, and that I am sorry it takes not, but to be angry or impatient at it I could not pardon myself; I look to him who makes every thing beautifull in its Season, and remember that saying of his, your time is always ready, but my time is not yet: As we are to forbear forbidden fruit at all times, so not to pull the best fruit in his Garden till he allows us, and some way signifiys he thinks them duly ripe and for use. I do heartily thank you for the kindness of communicating the inclosed Letters, for next to what is within me, the painfull reflection I have on this World is that there is so small a part of Mankind in whose breasts such thoughts are stirring, and am somewhat relieved when I meet with any thing of that kind, and long to meet with more, or to be gone where no such wishes are needfull: Oh! this dark night is very long, but blessed hope of that bright morning without cloud that is hast'ning forward. Well no more, but pray for

Your poor Friend and Servant

R. L.

I beseech you pain me not again with so excessively canonical a superscription of your Letters, for there's no need of it though they were to pass through twenty hands. Since I writ this I received another of yours for Mr. Blaw, the truth is,

for this next year I am already engaged to one that both needs and deserves a little help, and am bespoken for another to succeed the year after, but have not absolutely promised, and I therefore am at a little more liberty to consider it against that time, if it please God to continue me here so long; for the youth you name, you may be assured, if it can fall on that side, his relation to our brother, and your recommendation will have very much weight to make it do so, and that is all I can say of it at present.

For my Reverend Brother Mr. Aird, Minister at Forriburn.

No. XVII.

Sir,

I Wish I could punctually resolve you concerning that freedom of comencing to that excellent work which you desire, but the truth is, though I believe they are not there so strait laced by far as here, yet you having never exercised at all in publick, I am not sure they would not at all enquire concerning that, but it is likely nothing would be required, which (if you be not superstitious on the other hand) would trouble you; if you thought fit in the mean time to spend some weeks in that place you speak of, and to use the liberty of it in exercising, it might possibly pass for what you would avoid in the other. And if a fair invitation shall come, he to whom you have resigned yourself will direct you.

Sir,

Your very affectionate Friend.

To my own motions or stay, as I am in a most quiet indifferency myself, you I'm sure may much more easily be so. We are at sea, and cannot expect still to sail within speech, no nor within sight, but we hope to arrive at the same fair havens.

No. XVIII.

N. XVIII.

Sir,

THERE is one here come from *Ireland* to enquire after able young men for the Ministry, whom they may invite thither sending them transport Money, and assuring them of a liberal and certain provision there. He they sent hath been with me and was desirous to know if I could recommend any. It came into my thoughts to give you notice, that if you find any inclination that way I may know, I will not advise you much, less press you in it, but leave you wholly to the freedome of your own thoughts and choice, and to the best hand to determine them: I believe they expect of those that go, an engaging to a pastoral charge, but whither for some time they may not give a little liberty to some or to one at least in a freer posture to preach, or whether their pastoral engagement be so indissolubly fast as here I know not, you will think on that and if you judge it worth so much, let me hear from you how you relish it, however I wish you as to myself much happy success and advancement in your great design.

Your Friend to serve you.

N. XIX.

THE Lords of Council having appointed some Ministers from other parts, to preach in such churches within the diocese of *Glasgo* as do most need their help, I desire the Reverend Mr. *James Aird*, Minister at *Torry*, to bestow his pains in that corner that lyes eastward from *Hamilton* or thereabouts, and particularly in the Kirk of *Carluke*, not doubting that the Minister thereof, and others in the like case, will very gladly receive and earnestly intreat what help he can do towards the bringing of their people

people to frequent the publick Ordinances, and the removing of their prejudices and calming of their passions, that they may with one heart worship that one Lord whose name we all profess to love and honour.

Glasgo, Sept. 13, 1670.

R. LAUGHTON.

THIS is to recommend to the kind reception and assistance of the Gentlemen and Ministers, to whose parishes he shall resort, for preaching of the Gospel, within the diocese of Glasgow, our Reverend Brother Mr. *Lawrence Charteris*, Minister at *Bar*, being nominated and appointed by the Lords of Council, with some others from other parts for that effect.

Glasgo, Sept. 20, 1670.

To Mr. *L. Charteris* are recommended within the Presbytery of *Paisly* these Kirks, *Neelsen*, *Kildarschan*—vacant.

Likewise if his health permit *Killellen*, and *Kilmacomo*—though not vacant.

19 Oct. 1670.

R. LAUGHTON.

XIX M

P I N I S.

